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EAST INDIAN ART STYLES

A STUDY IN PARALLEL TRENDS

East Indian Art Styles

A Study in Parallel Trends

B. N. Mukherjee

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INSCRIBED
IN
LOVING MEMORY
OF
ANNAPURNA SARASWATI
WHOSE MOTHERLY AFFECTION
WAS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION
TO ME

PREFACE

This monograph embodies a part of my research in the history of sculptural art of the Indian subcontinent. Some of the data presented in Chapter II were incorporated in my two papers entitled "A Sub-School of Early Mediaeval Sculpture" and "A Local Idiom" presented respectively at the First International Congress on Bengal Art held in Dacca in March, 1976, and at an all India seminar on Pāla-Sena art (organised by the Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta) in Calcutta in March, 1978. Chapter II of the present monograph is also substantially the same as my article ("A Regional Idiom") published in the *East Indian Bronzes* (edited by Dr. S. K. Mitra) (Calcutta, 1979), which is the final report on a project conducted at the Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta. I have included in Chapter III some of my findings relating to sculpture of Kāmarūpa (Assam), to which attention of the academic world was drawn by me in the K. L. Barua Memorial Lectures for the year 1978 [entitled "Bronzes of Eastern India (Including Kāmarūpa) —A study in Local Idioms"] delivered in September, 1978, in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati, at the invitation of the Assam Research Society.

I have received in course of my relevant research valuable advices and suggestions from Prof. S. K. Saraswati. Authorities of several institutions, including those of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, the Assam State Museum, Gauhati, the Dacca Museum, Dacca, and the archeological museum at Comilla, have been kind enough to allow me to study their collections. I have been fortunate enough to see a number of important objects of art in possession of some erudite collectors, including Prof. S. K. Saraswati and Mr. P. Ray of Calcutta. In course of collecting data ungrudging help was received from Sri A. Ghosh and Miss. Mangala Shaw of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and Dr. R. D. Choudhury of the Assam State Museum, Gauhati.

The manuscript of the present monograph has been carefully typed by Mr. S. De and Mr S. Ghosh. Mr. K. Bagchi of M/S. K. P. Bagchi and Co. has graciously arranged for the publication of this monograph, which has been seen through the press by Mr. S. Mitra-Ray. Mr. R. Chakravarti has helped me in correcting the proofs. Sri S. Mukherjee has kindly prepared the index.

I am grateful to the above mentioned scholars and friends. I tender apology to my readers for the few printing mistakes which may have crept in.

B. N. Mukherjee

April, 1980
Calcutta

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EAST INDIAN ART STYLES

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Sculptural art of the Indian subcontinent of early and early mediaeval periods is divided, mainly on stylistic grounds, into a number of schools. Objects of art of a particular region and age, bearing stylistic traits of one of these schools, are considered as its products, and it is generally believed that all sculptures, particularly of stone and metal, produced in that territory and age, should belong to the school concerned.[1] Thus the feasibility of simultaneous existence of two idioms of sculptural art in one single area and period is not usually admitted. A well-known art critic has categorically stated that "I cannot think of any instance in the history of ancient Indian art which gives certain evidence of a popular trend followed closely parallelling a great tradition".[2]

This kind of observation by art historians poses a fundamental question relating to the development of Indian art. The question is whether an acknowledged school of sculpture of an area ever allowed the existence of another school or idiom of art in that region during the era of its dominance. A solution to this problem is of paramount importance to understand the trends in the development of Indian sculptural art. We propose to examine the problem with the help of early mediaeval materials recovered from two areas of the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent.

One of these areas includes within its limits parts of the territories now incorporated in Bihar, West Bengal and Bangladesh. Different sections of the area were known by different territorial and administrative names in the early mediaeval age.[3] During this period, ranging from about the middle of the 8th century to the beginning of the 13th century A.D., the area was politically dominated first by the Pālas and then by the Senas (along with a few other minor dynasties).[4] As the zone concerned is not known to have been called by a single name in the early mediaeval age, we are obliged, for the sake of convenience, to call it as the domain of the Pālas and Senas.

The other area is now a part of Assam. It was broadly within the territorial and/or political division called Kāmarūpa.[5] During the post-Varman and pre-

Āhom period (from about the middle of the 7th century to about the second quarter or middle of the 13th century A.D.) it was politically dominated by *inter alia* the successive dynasties of Śālastambha, Brahmapāla and Vallabhadeva.[6]

A well-known school of sculpture flourished in the first of the two areas during this early mediaeval age. This is called East Indian school (following Tāranātha) or Pāla (or Pāla-Sena) school.[7] The same school can be said to have extended its sway to Kāmarūpa in the early mediaeval period.[8] Our endeavour is to ascertain whether existing source materials warrant a hypothesis of the existence of other idiom or idioms of art in the areas concerned in the age of the dominance of the Pāla school.

NOTES

[1] A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927), pp. 15f; B. Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India* (1953), pp. 39f; S. Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, pp. 9f; etc.

[2] F. M. Asher, "Vikramaśilā Mahāvihāra", *Bangladesh Lalitkalā*, 1975, vol. I, no. 2, p. 112.

[3] R. C. Majumdar (editor), *The History of Bengal*, vol. I, pp. 12f; B. P. Sinha (editor), *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. I, pt. I, pp. 110f.

[4] R. C. Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, pp. 94f.

[5] P. C. Choudhury, *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A.D.*, pp. 38f.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 204f; K. L. Barua, *Early History of Kāmarūpa*, pp. 105f; E. Gait, *A History of Assam*, pp. 70f.

[7] *HB*, pp. 532f; S. K. Saraswati, *A Survey of Indian Sculpture* (2nd edition), pp. 185f; etc.

[8] See Chapter III. We have made elsewhere a detailed study of sculptures of Kāmarūpa assignable to the Pāla school. It will be published in a monograph entitled *Sculptural Art of Early Mediaeval Kāmarūpa*. R. M. Nath is entirely wrong in viewing an image from Deopani (Sibsagar District, Assam) as stylistically belonging to the Utkala tradition (*Journal of the Assam Research Society*, 1941, vol. VIII, no. 4, p. 133). The image betrays no definite affinity to the sculptural styles of early mediaeval art of Orissa (including Utkala) (S. Kramrisch, *op. cit.*, p. 112; *SIS*, pp. 190f; see also Chapter III).

CHAPTER TWO

In the Domain of the Pālas and Senas

A

A significant group of metal sculptures is the main subject of our study in this chapter. A few of them bear inscriptions in the proto-Bengali script and are datable, on palaeographic grounds, from the 9th to the 12th century[1] (fig. 1). On the basis of archaeological evidence and other data found at Mainamati, Paharpur, Nalanda, etc., many of such sculptures appear to be datable to a period ranging from the 8th to the 11th or 12th century A.D.[2] The bronze pieces in question have been found mainly in the northern and south-eastern regions of the territory now included in Bangladesh. Some of them have been recovered even from the site of Nalanda in Bihar (India). The number of finds reported from West Bengal is insignificant.[3]

The images appear to have been produced, as in the cases of icons of the contemporary Pāla school of art, by following the "lost wax" technique. The open space inside the image and its pedestal is found in some cases stuffed with terracotta, husk and other materials.[4]

The deities represented by these icons mostly belong to the Buddhist pantheon.[5] Among them are the Buddha, Maitreya, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrasattva, Mañjuśrī, Tārā, Vasudhārā, Prajñāpāramitā Chundā and others[6] (figs. 2-9). A few Brahmanical images, including one of Ganeśa[7] (fiig. 10), are also known. There is an inscribed image indicating the adoption of the Brahmanical goddess Śrī in the Buddhist cult[8] (fig. 1).

The bodies of the deities are often well formed, with contours prominently shown. But the general treatment is coarse and flattened to a certain extent. They lack the soft gracefulness of the images in metal as well as stone belonging to the Pāla school.[9] The eyes are open, often bulging. Eyebrows are raised. Lips are turned outward, resulting generally in a half-mocking weird smile. The nipples of female and often of male figures are very prominently shown. Male as well as female figures are adorned with ornaments. The lower garment is always given a separate volume, though it often clings to the body and is semidiaphanous. The upper part of the body is either bare or covered, sometimes only partly, with a thick or transparent garment (figs. 11—14).

The seated figures are generally shown as resting on a double- or single-petalled lotus throne. The icons, standing or sitting, are placed on simple or ornamented pedestals. The stela at the back is sometimes solid. In other cases only a frame (outer rim) stands for the stela. It is always very sparsely decorated.

The images are unsophisticated and virile in appearance. Stylistically their physiognomical details are in direct contrast to the soft, benign and calm facial expressions of the figures produced by the Pāla school[10] (figs. 15 and 16). Though the modelling of the late Pāla or Sena sculptures is a bit petrified[11] (figs. 17 and 18), they are often more sophisticated and graceful in appearance than most of the images under review.

Decorated stela is a characteristic of the Pāla or Pāla-Sena school. The degree of decoration was gradually enhanced with the progress of time.[12] No doubt, the stelae of bronze images of the Pāla-Sena school are generally less ornamented in comparison with those of its stone icons (fig. 19). But still we have several instances of fairly heavily decorated stelae in Pāla or Sena bronzes[13] (fig. 20). This is singularly absent from the sculptures under discussion.

Ornaments on Pāla or Sena images are chiselled with utmost care and precision.[14] This sense of preciseness is lacking in these figures, even though many of them are adorned with ornaments.

It is patently clear that there are basic differences in sculptural style between these images and those belonging to the acknowledged school of art of the Pāla or Sena period. These differences cannot be explained on the hypothesis of an interval between the two groups of sculptures. Images of both the groups have been found at the same level of occupation at different excavated sites like Mainamati (Commilla district), Bhasu-Vihar (Bogra district), etc.[15] Nor can we explain the differences merely on the basis of the suggestion that the sculptures concerned, which are admittedly of lesser artistic merit than many of the products of the Pāla school, are works of artists of comparatively inferior skill. In that case we should have found among the sculptures under review at least some heavily decorated (even if badly produced) stelae, decorated stelae having been a Pāla or Sena speciality. The difference between the two groups of sculptors relates chiefly to their ideas of and approach to plastic art, particularly to the art of creating human figures.

B

Obviously the sculptors concerned used an idiom different from that of the acknowledged school of the Pāla or Sena period, which followed a style of expression traceable to the Gupta classical art.[16] It is interesting to note that the physiognomical details—raised eyebrows, bulging eyes, out-turned lips, etc.,—of these images have striking similarity with those of terracotta figures unearthed during excavations at several places including Paharpur (Rajshahi district), Mainamati (Commilla district), Bhasu-Vihar (Bogra district) and Antichak (Bhagalpur district)[17] (figs. 21—36). Many of these have been dated to the early mediaeval period,[18] to which age the images in question are also to be attributed. Terracotta had been used for hieratic as well as secular art. The Buddha, Boddhisattva Vajrapāṇi, Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, Jambhala, Trailokyavijaya, Tārā, Mārīchī and others appear in terracotta plaques recovered from Paharpur, Mahasthangarh, Mainamati, Antichak, etc.[19]

Several stone sculptures, unearthed at the site of the great temple at Paharpur (now in the Rajshahi district of Bangladesh), pertain to an idiom of art, intimately related, from the stylistic point of view, to the art of the terracotta sculptures of the same locality[20] (fig. 37). These stone sculptures have been found on the lower side of the both faces of almost all the projecting corners of the basement, the upper part of which is sunken to receive a continuous row of terracotta friezes going around the monument.[21] The sculptures concerned are almost always of approximately the same height as that of the lower part of the basement of the monument, which they adorn.[22] In fact, they fit in very well with the scheme of the projecting corners of the basement.[23] Obviously these sculptures were used by original builders of the temple for protecting the vulnerable lower section of the projecting corners of the brick-built structure. Terracotta plaques, stylistically related to these sculptures, are found on the walls of the upper terraces as well as, as noted above, on the upper side of the basement, including the space above the stone sculptures at the corners.[24] The locations of the terracotta plaques on the basement suit so well with the positions of the stone sculptures at the corners that it may be confidently assumed that these terracotta objects of art were apparently used as decorative friezes at the time of erection of the temple. Thus the terracotta and the stone sculptures, which are stylistically related with one another, should be dated to the period of the erection of the Paharpur temple.[25] Standing in the centre of a monastery, the temple "was evidently an essential part of the monastic scheme, and must have been laid out and erected simultaneously with the monastery".[26]

Epigraphic evidence, unearthed at Paharpur, proves that the monastery at Somapura (Paharpur) was called after Dharmapāla.[27] Apparently the monastery was built in or about the time of the Pāla king of that name, who ruled from c. A.D. 775 to 812.[28] This inference would date the stone and terracotta sculptures in question, which are considered on stylistic grounds to belong to the third group of the Paharpur sculptures,[29] to c. 8th century A.D.

The same style for fashioning stone might have been followed also at some other sites in and about that period. For an example, we can refer to the representations of Sūrya, Lakulīśa and Vishṇu on a door lintel inscribed in the year 26 of the reign of Dharmapāla. This was found at Bodhgaya (Bihar)[30] (fig. 38). All the three figures on the unornamented lintel are unsophisticated in appearance. Though the semidiaphanous drapery of each of them, particularly that of the representation of Vishṇu, betrays a legacy of Gupta art, the style of execution, as witnessed here, is crude. The figure of Vishṇu has a weird face, bulging eyes, out-turned lips and prominent nipples—all of which are characteristics of the art of the terracotta sculptures mentioned above.

It appears that in some areas of the eastern region of the Indian subcontinent, including the locality of Paharpur, local artists of the early mediaeval age translated an unsophisticated art into terracotta and also stone.[31] The identical art style was used for creating metal figures at Paharpur, Mainamati, and several other places now included in North and South-East Bangladesh and also in a few localities [including Nalanda and Antichak (?)] lying outside the limits of Bangladesh.

C

The beginning of the use of this style for hieratic art may predate the Pāla period. The metal image of Vishṇu from Kumarpur (Rajshahi district) (fig. 57), which may be stylistically considered as a work of the 7th or early 8th century A.D.,[32] bears some of the characteristic features of this idiom like an unsophisticated appearance, a weird face, bulging eyes, out-turned lips and prominent nipples. The arid and petrified appearance of this image is quite different from the soft and graceful treatment of the bronze image of Śiva from Manir Tat (Twenty-four Parganas) (fig. 39) or of the stone icon of Vishṇu from Kakdhighi (West Dinajpur district) (fig. 40), both of which belong to the last phase of Gupta sculpture and are datable to about the same period.[33]

The evidence of the Paharpur sculptures supplies us with more definite data about the date of the origin of this art style. The first group of the Paharpur sculptures may be considered to have followed the eastern trend of the Gupta sculptural style.[34] The stylistic treatment of the objects of art belonging to this group may be favourably compared with that of the stucco reliefs of Maniyar-Math at Rajgir, datable to the Gupta age.[35] The gliding linear rhythm indicated by the treatment of the figures belonging to the first group is absent from the pieces forming the second group of sculptures at Paharpur, though both the groups share a few common stylistic traits. The second group is also marked by a comparative heaviness in the treatment of bodily forms and physiognomical details.[36] Faces of some of the figures are somewhat weird in appearance and/or have out-turned lips and/or raised eyebrows. These characteristics, as noted above, also distinguish works in terracotta and stone belonging to the third group of sculptures.[37]

Thus stylistically the second group falls between the first and third groups of sculptures at Paharpur.

The great majority of sculptures of the first and second groups are unequally distributed on the wall (between the corners) of different sectors of the basement of the Paharpur temple.[38] On the wall of certain sectors they do not appear at all.[39] Again, we can notice their appearance at irregular intervals on the wall of the sectors displaying such sculptures.[40] Moreover, while some of them do not exactly fit in with their niches, there are also indications of cutting in the wall to make room for some others. Missing portions of a number of these sculptures are found filled up with terracotta work.[41] All these indicate a singular lack of cohesive planning in the arrangement of these sculptures of the first and second groups on the walls between the corners of the basement, and support the theory that these do not belong to the scheme of decoration followed at the time of construction of the massive temple, which was evidently done on the basis of a proper planning.[42] These were perhaps put up on the wall of different sectors of the basement simultaneously or on different dates some time after the construction of the temple. The evidence of the use of a few broken sculptures for embellishing the wall between the projecting corners suggests that the sculptures of these two groups adorning intermittently the space between the corners had been used originally in some other establishments in the neighbourhood of the Paharpur temple,[43] and that they were later re-used for decorating the temple in question, sometime after its original construction in c. 8th century A.D. or in the initial period of the Pāla rule. And since the second group, in which we can trace a few of the traits of the third group, stylistically falls before the latter, it's beginning may be dated before the Pāla period.

It is interesting to note that five of the stone sculptures at the corners of the monument may be attributed to the second group.[44] They may be dated to the period of construction of the temple, if we believe that all the stone sculptures at projecting corners as exposed by archaeological excavation are to be dated to that age. However, these five sculptures may well have been replacements done, with the help of older materials (see above), at the time of renovations of the monument. In fact, four out of these five sculptures do not fit in with the recesses at the corners meant for receiving them.[45] The gaps in two cases are filled up apparently with teracotta work.[46] Thus perhaps all sculptures of the second group (and not only the vast majority of them) at Paharpur may be placed before the Pāla age.

This inference enhances the probability of a pre-Pāla origin of the unsophisticated art style betrayed by the third group. In fact, if, as pointed out above, the sculptures of the third group were coeval with the construction of the temple in the initial period of the Pāla rule, the idiom of art followed by them might well have originated in a still earlier age. Such a hypothesis is further strengthened by the impact of the art idiom in question on the Sarvāṇī image (at Deulbadi) of the reign of Devakhaḍga, which can be placed in the second half of the 7th century A.D.[47] The Deulbadi image bears, like the human figures of the third and a few of the second group of the Paharpur sculptures, a weird facial expression.[48] Thus we may presume a pre-Pāla origin of the art idiom indicated by the above noted terracotta, stone and metal sculptures.

D

Not all the metal sculptures under review are of the same artistic merit. While many of them show a virile attitude and artists' sense of proportion (fig. 41), some of them are very crude and coarse in appearance (figs. 42 and 43). The difference may be due to varying skills of the artists concerned. A few of the stylistic differences may be explained as indications of the development of stylistic features in the relevant idiom of art.[49] On the basis of a comparative study of the sculptures concerned and dated or datable bronze icons of the Pāla school as well as of the period immediately preceding the Pāla age, it may be guessed that the tendency to provide images with solid stela developed later than the beginning of the practice of showing only the outline or frame of it at the back of the images.[50] This point, however, should not be pressed too far, since partly hollow stela became popular with the stone sculptors of the Pāla school at a somewhat later stage of its evolution.

Most of the metal figures under review are small in size and are portable. Since they were less costly than the images of usual size, these were within the reach of the common people, including pilgrims and monks. These people might have been responsible for migration of many of these icons to localities outside the areas of their production. One of such images was unearthed in a distant region like Sri Lanka[51] (fig. 44).

We must not, however, lose sight of the above noted fact that the idiom of art under review was also employed in chiselling stone plaques for the great temple in the monastery named after king Dharmapāla, which was established at Somapura (Paharpur)[52] by or with the help of the Pālas. The sculptors concerned could, therefore, secure at least at some stage of their activities, the patronage of the royal house or the richer section of the society. The content of the hoard found at Jhewari in the Chittagong district clearly shows that its owner or owners collected not only bronze images of the Pāla school and certain figures bearing affinity to Burmese bronzes of the early mediaeval age,[53] but also icons made according to the idiom of art in question.[54]

E

The idiom in question exerted some influence on several products of more sophisticated school or schools. The cases in point are supplied by the image of Sarvāṇī at Deulbadi (which bears an unsophisticated weird facial expression), a stone image of Jambhala from the Dacca district (which has raised eyebrows and bulging eyes), the figure of Maheśvara in a representation of Umā and Maheśvara at Keor (Dacca district) (which has bulging eyes and raised eyebrows), etc.[55]

Metal images pertaining to or at least having affinity to the idiom of art in question have been found also outside the generally accepted limits of the Pāla empire. We can refer to a few representations of Buddhist dieties like Vajrasattva, Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī (fig. 45) and Chundā and an icon of the Jaina divinity Āmrā, discovered in a hoard at Achutrajpur (Puri district, Orissa).[56] Attention of scholars may also be drawn to an image of the Brahmanical god Vishṇu and one of Chundā (fig. 89), among the archaeological finds in the Narakasur hill area in the suburb of Gauhati,[57] and also to icons of Vishṇu, Gaṇeśa and Chundā (?) recovered from a hoard at Hahara (Kamrup district, Assam).[58] These metal images may be dated to the early mediaeval age on several grounds including the palaeographic evidence of the inscriptions on some of the objects found in the hoards concerned.[59] The sculptures in question betray one or more of the characteristics of the idiom of art under review, such as coarse and somewhat flattened treatment of the body, peculiar physiognomical details like outturned lips, raised eyebrows and bulging eyes, little or no decoration on the accompanying stela, etc. If these icons are taken as products of the areas of their discoveries, their stylistic features may be interpreted as traits of the local art developed independently or with the knowledge of the idiom of art under review. However, the images may also be considered to have been brought to the places of their discoveries from the area of regular operation of the art idiom concerned. The last hypothesis cannot be ruled out, since all of them are small in size and portable.

A few bronze votive tablets found in the ruins of Pagan (in the Myingyan district, Burma) bear seated figures with bulging eyes, out-turned lips, etc.[60] (figs. 4—6). These might have been imported from a not-too-distant area now included in Bangladesh. Or at least the inspiration for following the terracotta art idiom as well as certain iconographic compositions (fig. 47) might have come from that area.[61] We cannot lightly dismiss either of these possibilities in view of the evidence of contacts between different regions of Burma and Bangladesh in the early mediaeval period. The points of similarity as well as divergence between the great temple at Paharpur and the square temples at Pagan have already been noted.[62] The coinage of the Chandras of Arakan supplied the prototype for the coinage of Harikela,[63] and, probably through the latter, influenced the coinage of Paṭṭikerā, which included *inter alia* the Comilla area.[64] According to the *Hmannan*, the kingdom of Anoratha (C.A.D. 1044-1077) was bounded on the west by Patikkara, i.e., Paṭṭikerā. There were matrimonial and other contacts between the royal family or families of Paṭṭikerā and the successors of Anoratha.[65] The knowledge of local artists of Paṭṭikerā about the Burmese people is suggested by a terracotta plaque recovered from Rupban-mura of Mainamati (Comilla district), which depicts a woman wearing striped pyjamas and a peculiar cap which are generally worn by the Burmese.[66] Certain images among the Jhewari sculptures show, as it has been claimed, affinities to some Burmese bronzes.[67]

Several bronzes discovered in Central as well as Eastern Java (Indonesia), datable on stylistic grounds to the early mediaeval period, betray clear influences of the well-known school of Pāla or Pāla-Sena art.[68] Some of them might have been brought to Java from the Pāla or Sena territory. There are indications of intercourse between Java and Eastern India in the Pāla age. An inscription from Kelurak (Jogyakarta district, Java), dated in the Śaka year 704 (=A.D. 782), refers to the setting up of an image of Mañjuśrī by Kumāraghosha, the royal preceptor hailing from Gauḍa.[69] A copper-plate inscription of the time of the Pāla king Devapāla records the grant of five villages, made by him at the instance of king Bālaputradeva of the Śailendra family of Yavabhūmi, for *inter alia* the upkeep of a *vihāra* at Nālandā built by the same Bālaputradeva, described also as the Lord of Suvarṇadvīpa.[70] One of the specified reasons for making the grant was to facilitate the work of writing *Dharma-ratnas*[71] (or Buddhist texts), apparently at the said monastery. This evidence may indirectly allude to the encouragement given by the Pālas and perhaps also by the Śailendras to art activities in the Pāla domain, since several manuscripts of Buddhist texts written in the Nālandā and other monasteries of the Pāla empire are known to be illustrated with paintings.[72] Javanese interest in Pāla art is further indicated by the introduction of some of the latter's types and motifs into East Javanese sculpture.[73] All these data may support the view that some of the products of the Pāla school might have been actually exported to Java.[74]

It will be interesting to note in the light of the above information that a few of the bronzes found in Java, which may be broadly alligned to the Pāla school, betray certain stylistic affinity to the idiom of art in question. For an example, we can refer to a bronze image of Vishṇu from East Java. This icon, datable to the 9th-10th century A.D., displays prominent nipples, out-turned lips, bulging eyes and raised eyebrows[75] (fig 48). A metal icon of Avalokiteśvara, found in Central Java and dated to the 9th-10th centutry A.D., has raised eyebrows and a little out-turned lips[76] (fig. 49). Such sculptures might have been products of artists familiar with the stylistic features of the idiom of art under review. However, we cannot altogether deny the feasibility of their having been influenced by identical traits pertaining to some other idiom of art.

F

It appears from the above study that there was a conscious attempt to use the idiom of art in question for preparing metal icons as well as terracotta and stone plaques during the early mediaeval period chiefly in the areas now included in South Bihar and northern and eastern sections of Bangladesh. The preponderance of Buddhist icons among the metal images in question suggests that the Buddhists were among the chief patrons of this idiom of art.

The influence of this idiom is not known to have been so pervading in the early mediaeval art of the eastern region of the Indian subcontinent (including Pakistan, India and Bangladesh) as to merit the distinction of forming an independent school. But, at the same time, the evidence of stone plaques and bronze sculptures as well as terracotta figures, indicates the existence of an art style distinct from that of the well-known school of the Pāla or the Sena period. This art style might have formed a separate idiom of early mediaeval sculpture.[77]

The beginning of the use of this style for hieratic art may, as we have noted above, predate the Pāla period. Its use in the early Pāla period is suggested by the sculptures of the third group at Paharpur and the inscribed door lintel from Bodhgaya, referred to above. The inscription records the establishment of a representation of four-faced Mahādeva in a temple of Śiva (Champeśa) and the excavation of a tank at the cost of three thousand drammas by one Keśava, a son of Ujjvala, a sculptor, in the 26th (regnal) year of Dharmapāla.[78] Keśava was obviously an affluent man, and, as the son of a sculptor, was apparently in a position to get information from his father or the latter's acquaintances on the current trends in sculptural activities. Hence it was only natural for him to employ for preparing the sculptured door lintel an artist well versed in the prevailing art style. The bulging eyes of Vishṇu and the raised eyebrows and the out-turned lips of Vishṇu, Lakulīśa, and Sūrya, and the rather coarse and flattened treatment of their bodies, as shown on the door lintel, betray the adherence of the artist concerned to the art style under discussion.[79] Hence, this idiom of art was popular in the existing conditions in the early days of the Pāla empire.

The activities of the Gupta school of sculpture in the territories now incorporated in South Bihar, West Bengal and Bangladesh apparently suffered with the downfall of the Gupta empire and the resultant turmoil, and also on account of intermittent political instability which plagued these areas till the foundation of the Pāla empire. In such conditions there would have been a decline in the number of rich clients like rulers and traders, who could have bestowed financial patronage in a peaceful and politically stable region and period. The near-absence of a rich clientele, lavish patronage of which was so very essential for the survival of master artists well-versed in a rich plastic idiom, led to the gradual dissipation of the Gupta art tradition in the areas in question. Under such circumstances, artists, enjoying moderate local patronage and working under influences steeped in local art tradition, would try to meet the local demands for images. They would follow the local or regional style, even without being completely immune of the lingering influence of Gupta art. Some such conditions might have gradually led the medium of art in question into prominence in at least some parts of Eastern India in the period immediately preceeding the Pāla age. Its abiding influence in certain localities in the early years of the Pāla empire is evident from the Bodhgaya door lintel and few other sculptures.

There were, however, conscious attempts from the early period of the Pāla empire to elevate plastic activities to a high level of excellence. According to Tāranātha, during the days of Dharmapāla and Devapāla two highly skilled artists—called Dhīmān and Biṭpalo—practised various techniques "like those of metal-casting, engraving (in stone), and painting". They followed different traditions. But the "cast-images made by followers of both were called eastern icons, wherever those followers might have been born".[80] Activities of such master artists, working under the liberal patronage of the Pālas and having a rich clientele, evolved the Pāla school of sculpture.[81]

The new trends in art activities did not, as shown above, lead to the disappearance of the idiom of expression under discussion. It continued to flourish in at least certain parts of the Pāla empire. Again, traits of this art style can be traced in the physiognomical details of some early icons of the Pāla school.[82] However, on the other hand, some of the sculptures of this idiom indicate influences of the Pāla school of art.[83] Impact and/or products of this art style can be noticed in the territories contiguous to or situated not far from the generally accepted limits of the Pāla or Sena empire,[84] and perhaps also, though with a lesser degree of certainty, in certain areas of South-East Asia.[85]

We do not know exactly when the practice of producing stone sculptures, terracotta plaques and metal images according to this idiom was given up. This might have happened in the period which saw the general decay in sculptural art of the eastern region of the Indian subcontinent.

NOTES

[1] *Sundaram* (in Bengali), vol. III, no. 1, 1365 B.S., pp. 140-42 ; See also the author's paper in H. C. Das and others (editors), *Buddhism and Jainism* (proceedings of an international seminar on Buddhism. and Jainism held in Cuttack in January, 1976), pp. 193-195.

[2] D. R. Bhandarkar and others (editors), *B. C. Law Volume*, pt. II p. 225 and pl. V, no. 2 ; K. N. Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur*, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, no. 55, pp. 74 and 85 ; pl. LVIII, no. c ; *Archaeological Survey of India*, *Annual Report*, 1929-30, pl. XXXIII, no. d ; *Bangladesh Lalitkalā*, 1975, vol. I, no. 1, p. 17 ; pl. X, figs. 12 and 13.

[3] See above n. 2. One of such bronze images is known to have been recovered from the Sundarban area of West Bengal.

[4] The materials often remained inside the image as a result of following "lost-wax" technique of production. For a discussion on the "lost-wax" technique of production of metal images, see M. V. Krishnan, *Cire-Perdu Casting in India*, pp. 1f.

[5] This remark is made on the basis of examination of several relevant bronze sculptures in the Indian Museum and the Nalanda Museum.

[6] *BCLV*, vol. II, pl. V, no. 2 ; *BL*, 1975, vol. I, no. 1, pl. X, figs. 12-15 ; *ASI*, *AR*, 1927-28, pl. XLIX, no. c.

[7] *EP*, pl. LVIII, no. c.

[8] See above n. 1. See also Appendix I.

[9] R. D. Banerjee, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, pl. IV, no. d ; pl. VII, no. b ; pl. XII, no. c ; pl. II, no. b ; pl. III, nos. a and d.

[10] R. C. Majumdar (editor), *The History of Bengal*, vol. I, pl. LXIX, no. 168 ; LXX, no. 170 ; LXXII, no. 175 ; LXXVII, no. 180 ; *ASI*, *AR*, 1930-34, pl. CXXXIV, no. c ; CXXXVI. no. d ; etc.

[11] HB, pl. LXXIV, no. 177 ; pl. LXXV, no. 178 ; pl. LXX VII, no. 180 ; etc.

[12] *HB*, p. 537.

[13] *Ibid.*, pl. LXXIII, no. 176 ; *ASI*, *AR*, 1930-34, pl. CXXXIV, no. c ; *EISMS*, pl. LXXIV, no. a ; etc.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 536.

[15] A. K. M. Shamsul Alam, *Mainamati*, p. 53 ; M. Harunur Rashid, "The Mainamati Sculpture" (cyclostyled copy of the paper read at the First International Congress on Bengal Art held in Dacca in March, 1976), p. 3 ; *BL*, 1975, vol. I, no. 1, p. 16 and pll. IX and X.

[16] *HB*, p. 538 ; S. K. Saraswati, *A Survey of Indian Sculpture* (2nd edition), pp. 185f.

[17] *EP*, pp. 89-90 ; *BCLV*, pt. II, pll. VII, f ; *ASI*, *AR*, 1936-37, p. 53 ; pl. XVI ; A. K. M. Shamsul Alam, *Mainamati*, pl. XI, no. c ; pl. XII, no. a ; S. K. Saraswati, *Early Sculpture of Bengal* (2nd edition), pl. XXI, nos. 52-55 ; pl. XXIV, no. 62 ; *BL*, 1975, vol. I, no. 1, p. 15 and pl. VI, nos. 3 and 4 ; B. Sahai, "Terracotta plaques from Antichak", *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, 1971, vol. LVII, pp. 57-76 ; *BL*, 1975, vol. I, no. 2, p. 112 and pl. XXXIII, no. 4 ; etc.). With the style of execution, revealed by these objects of art, we can associate a few of the terracotta sculptures found at Mahasthan (Bogra district, Bangladesh) (N. Ahmed, *Mahasthan*, pl. XI, no. a). Certain terracotta plaques (including a few inscribed pieces), found at Dharawat in the Gaya district, are stylistically comparable with the Antichak sculptures [B. P. Sinha (editor), *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 647-648 ; pl. 73].

[18] *BCLV*, pt. II, pp. 220 and 225 ; *BL*, 1975, vol. I, no. 1, p. 15 ; etc. F. M. Asher denies the existence of a local idiom of art at Paharpur (or at Antichak) during the Pāla period, mainly because he "cannot think of any instance in the history of ancient Indian art which gives certain evidence of a popular trend followed closely paralleling

a great tradition" (*BL*, 1975, vol. I, no. 2, p. 112). The evidence of the bronze images furnished by us clearly alludes to the knowledge of an idiom of art in the Pāla age, which was distinguished from the acknowledged school of art of the Pāla empire. We have data from certain areas of the Indian subcontinent (in addition to Bihar, West Bengal and Bangladesh), which suggest simultaneous existence of more than one idiom or style in plastic art in early or early mediaeval age (see below n. 84). Moreover, such a situation in art activities is not at all inconceivable. Kalighat paintings are known to have been produced in West Bengal simultaneously with paintings following more sophisticated styles.

[19] *Ibid.*, pl. VII, nos. 2, 3, 5, etc; *ASI*, *AR*, 1936-37, p. 57, etc.; *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, 1971, vol. LVII, pp. 62f. A terracotta plaque at Paharpur displays the nativity of the Buddha (*ESB*, fig. 36). Brahmanical deities also appear on the terracotta plaques at Paharpur (*ESB*, pp. 81f) and Antichak (*JBRS*, 1971, vol. LVII, pp. 65-66 and 69).

[20] *ESB*, p. 44; pl. XIV, no. 35.

[21] S. K. Saraswati, *Architecture of Bengal*, bk. I, p. 118; *EP*., pl. XXVI, nos. (c) and (d). See also below n. 24.

[22] *AB*, p. 120; *EP*, pl. XXVI, nos. (c) and (d).

[23] See above n. 22.

[24] *EP*, pl. XXVI, no. c; see also pl. VII, nos. (a) and (b); pl. XII, nos. (c) and (d).

[25] *AB*, bk. I, p. 120.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120; *ESB*, p. 38.

[27] *EP*, p. 90.

[28] *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, 1975-76, vol. IX, p. 209; *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 1976, vol. XVIII, p. 98.

[29] *ESB*, pp. 47-49 and 81f.

[30] *EISMS*, p. 21 and pl. I, no. 1; *Indian Antiquary*, 1920, vol. XLIX, p. 193.

[31] See also *ESB*, p. 45.

[32] *HB*, pp. 538-39; pl. LIX, no. 146.

[33] *Ibid.*, pl. LXI, no. 148; *ESB*, pl. II, no. 6.

[34] *ESB*, pp. 40 and 51f.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 41; A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 82; pl. XLVII, no. 176.

[36] *ESB*, pp. 41 and 65f.

[37] *Ibid.*, figs. 22, 25, 28, 29, etc.

[38] *EP*, sketch plan showing positions of stone sculptures; *AB*, bk. I, pp. 117-118.

[39] See above n. 38.

[40] See above n. 38. See also *EP*, pl. XI, no. (c); pl. X, nos. (b) and (d); etc.

[41] *AB*, bk. I, p. 117.

[42] *ESB*, pp. 43-44; *AB*, bk. I, pp. 116-120.

[43] A copper plate, found in one of the *maṇḍapa* halls on the second terrace of the Paharpur temple, bears an inscription dated in the year 159 of the Gupta era (A.D. 478-79). It records grant of certain plots of land for the ultimate benefit to the monastery of a Jaina preceptor called Guhanandin at Vaṭagohālī (*Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XX, pp. 61f). Vaṭagohālī is identifiable with Goalbhita, a village adjacent to Paharpur (which locality was known in the Pāla age as Somapura) (but see also *ibid.*, p. 60). This record was evidently brought to the precincts of the Paharpur temple from an old monastic site in the neighbourhood. This indicates that there is nothing inherently wrong in the supposition that sculptures of the first and second groups at Paharpur might have been similarly brought from some older shrines or establishments in its neighbourhood.

[44] Stone sculptures nos. 4, 60, 61, 62 and 63 (*EP*, pp. 39 and 53-54; pl. XXXI, no. (b); pl. XXX, nos. (b), (c), (d) and (a).

[45] *EP*, pl. XXX, nos. (b), (c) and (d); pl. XXXI, no. (b).

[46] *Ibid.*, pl. XXX, nos. (c) and (d).

[47] R. C. Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal,* pp. 78-79.

[48] *EISMS*, pl. I, no. c.

[49] As noted above, terracotta plaques discovered at Paharpur, Mainamati, Bhasu-Bihar, etc., follow the art style in question. N. Ahmed intends to notice, though not with much cogent reason, differences between terracotta plaques at Bhasu-Bihar and those from Paharpur and Mainamati relating to their "general character, refinement, sculpture from Bhasu-Bihar "may be somewhat later in date" than those from Paharpur style and workmanship". He thinks that these differences indicate that the terracotta and Mainamati. If Ahmed's hypothesis is correct, the Bhasu-Bihar sculptures may be examined to ascertain the evolution or development of certain stylistic features of the idiom of art in question. But it should be pointed out that at least one terracotta plaque at Bhasu-Bihar is embellished with foliage, oblique treatment of which reminds us of similar treatment of foliage in Gupta sculptures.

[50] *HB*, pl. LIX, no. 145; pl. LX, no. 146; pl. LXIV, nos. 163 and 165; pl. LXXIII, no, 176; pl. LXXIV, no. 177; *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, 1934, vol. II, pl. LXXXVIIIb, no. 1.

[51] We are referring to an image of a Bodhisattva. It was found in Sri Lanka. It is now in the British Museum (no. 1898, 7-2, 147). The information is received from Dr. W. Zwalf of the British Museum.

[52] *EP*, p. 90.

[53] *ASI, AR*, 1927-28, p. 184.

[54] Seven small seated images of the Buddha, unearthed at Mainamati, have traces of gold plating (fig. 50). They are included in the reserve collection of the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Their accession numbers are A24808-A24814. These icons can be stylistically associated with the medium of art under discussion. The evidence of these gold plated bronze images indicates that among the patrons of this medium of art were people who were affluent enough to pay for fairly costly objects of art.

[55] N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum,* pl. LXX; pl. XI, no. (a); pl. LI, no. (b); etc.

[56] D. Mitra, *Bronzes from Achutrajpur, Orissa,* p. 1; figs. 81, 57, 62, 71 and 112.

[57] *Journal of the Assam Research Society,* 1970, vol. XIX, pp. 23, 26 and 29; figs. 5 and 10. These images are now in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati.

[58] These icons are now kept in the reserve collection of the Assam State Museum, Gauhati.

[59] D. Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 145; *Journal of the Assam Research Society*, 1970, vol. XIX, p. 32; fig. 19; 1962, vol. XVI, pp. 58-59.

[60] G. H. Luce, *Old Burma—Early Pagan*, vol. II, pl. 55, no. d.

[61] For terracotta tablets found at Pagan, see *ibid.*, pl. 55, no. a, c and e; etc.

[62] *Journal of the Greater India Society*, vol. IX, p. 5; *AB*, bk. I, p. 86.

[63] *Asiatic Society, Monthly Bulletin*, 1976, January, p. 9; BL, 1975, vol. I, no. 2, pp. 115f.

[64] *BCLV*, pt. II, pl. V, no. 1; *Journal of the Varendra Research Museum*, 1975-76, vol. IV, p. 21.

[65] *HB*, pp. 257-58.

[66] *BCLV*, pt. II, p. 226; pl. XV, no. 6. See also *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1933, vol. IX, pp. 284f.

[67] *ASI, AR*, 1927-28, p. 184. See also below n. 85.

[68] *Borobudur, Chefs—D'oeuvre du Bouddhisme et de L'Hindousime en Indonésie*, Paris, 1978, figs. 53, 56, 57, 58, 62, 64, etc.

[69] R. C. Majumdar, *Suvarṇadvīpa*, vol. I, pp. 151-152.

[70] *EI*, vol. XVII, pp. 322-325.

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] S. K. Saraswati, *Pālayugera Chitrakalā* (in Bengali), pp. 37f.

[73] A. J. Bernet-Kempers, *The Bronzes of Nalanda and Indo-Javanese Art*, pp. 49f and 76-79 ; see also *ibid.*, p. 7.

[74] *Ibid.*, pp. 73 and 77.

[75] *Borbudur, Chef's-D'oeuvre du Bouddhisme et de L'Hindousime en Indonésie*, fig. 56.

[76] *Ibid.*, fig. 58.

[77] In this connection see also *ASI, AR*, 1927-28, p. 184.

[78] S. K. Maity and R. R. Mukherjee, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p. 112.

[79] *EISMS*, pl. I, no. 1.

[80] Tāranātha, *Rgy. gar. chos. ḥbyuṅ*, ch. XLIV ; Lama Chimpa and A. Chattopadhyay, *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, p. 348.

[81] In this connection see also S. K. Saraswati, *A Survey of Indian Sculpture* (2nd edition), p. 185.

[82] For an example, we can refer to an image of Balarāma of the period of Devapāla, which shows raised eyebrows and out-turned lips (*EISMS*, pl. I, no. b). This icon, though a product of the Pāla school, betrays some impact of the idiom of art under discussion.

[83] For an example, compare the precise treatment of ornaments embellishing a Bhasu-Bihar terracotta figure with a similar treatment of ornaments in sculptures of the regular Pāla school (*BL*, 1975, vol. I, no. 1, pl. VI, fig. 4 ; *EISMS*, pl. XI, no. (c) ; pl. XII, no. (a), etc.).

[84] See Chapter III. See also B. N. Mukherjee, "A Regional Idiom", S. K. Mitra (editor), *East Indian Bronzes*, pp. 59-60, n. 85.

[85] The kingdom of Pagan (Arimardanapura) (Burma) had cultural intercourse with *inter alia* the eastern region of the Indian subcontinent (G. H. Luce, *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 91, 96 and 188). There is enough evidence indicating influence of the regular Pāla school on the sculptural art of Pagan (*ibid.*, pp. 16-17 and 224 ; pll. 195f and 431f ; *BL*, 1975, vol. I, no. 1, pp. 25f). On the other hand, Kyanzittha of Pagan is described in an epigraphic source as responsible for rebuilding Śrī Bajrās (i.e., the Vajrāsana temple at Bodhgaya) (G. H. Luce, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63). For data suggesting impact of the Pāla school of sculpture on the art of Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal and Tibet, see EIB, pp. 38-45.

CHAPTER THREE

In The Land of Kāmarūpa

A

The idiom of sculptural art, evolved in the Gupta empire, transcended its limits, chronological as well as political.[1] Its spirit saturated the minds of artists of neighbouring territories.[2] Among such regions were Kāmarūpa and Ḍavāka, the two border states of the Gupta empire.[3] Their areas can be placed within the limits of modern Assam.[4]

The well-known lintel and jambs of the door of a ruined temple at Dah-Parvatiya (Darrang district) constitute a shining example of the extension of the Gupta idiom to the valley of Assam. Two principal female figures (representing Gaṅgā and Yamunā ?) appear on the lower parts of the jambs, one on the jamb on the left and other on that on the right. Each of them holds a garland of pearls or beads, has a halo behind the head and has a pair of flying geese adoring her from behind. Above these figures the jambs are (at different levels) decorated with rich foliage and arabasque designs and niches displaying different types of figures. The lintel is also similarly decorated. Its projecting topmost section is embellished, like the lintels of several Gupta temples, with three principal *chaitya* window motifs containing divine figures. The lintel has a flying figure adoring the centre of its two lower sections. The figures and designs betray artists' sense of proportion and their inclination for gliding linearism. No figure is static. The posture of standing of each of them imparts to it a sense of subtle movement. Tender modelling, slim and elongated torso, suave and flowing contours and a sensuous charm distinguish the figures, particularly the two principal figures. Diaphanous or semidiaphanous treatment of drapery enhances their sensuous charm (figs. 51 and, 52). All these characterise the eastern version of the Gupta (Sarnath) school of sculpture.[5]

A beautiful and well-shaped female bust, discovered at Mikirati (Nowgong district),[6] clearly follows the identical style (fig. 53). Such examples allow us to fathom the depth of the influence of Gupta art on the area now included in Assam. In fact, as it is well-known, the Gupta influence was not confined to art activities of the people of Kāmarūpa and Ḍavāka. We can notice the similarity of names of some early Kāmarūpa kings (like Samudravarman and Chandramukhavarman) with those of a few Gupta emperors (like Samudragupta and Chandragupta).[7] There are also data indicating the use in Kāmarūpa of administrative terms and forms and even of an era known to have been in vogue in the Gupta empire.[8] It appears that the impact of the contact of Kāmarūpa and Ḍavāka with the Gupta empire had on them a lasting effect.

B

Lingering of the Gupta tradition in and around Kāmarūpa for a period even after the decline of direct influence of Gupta art may be traced in the general appearance and diaphanous treatment of the drapery of a four-armed stone image of Vishṇu, holding a lotus and a conch in the upper two hands and placing the lower two hands on the heads of two standing figures, one male (Chakrapurusha ?) and the other female (Gadādevī ?). The deity stands on a lotus (?) and has a halo behind his head. The crown on his head is mutilated (fig. 54). The sculpture was found at Karamedhipara near Dudhnoi in the Goalpara district.[9] The composition of this type of representation of Vishṇu compares favourably with that of the same deity discovered at Kakdighi (West Dinajpur district) and dated stylistically to the post-Gupta age[10] (fig. 40). The stiff standing attitude of the figure of Vishṇu in question suggests that the influence of the eastern version of Gupta (Sarnath) school, so well-known for production of figures with flowing contours and indicating subtle movement of their bodies, had begun to wane in Kāmarūpa by the date of the creation of Karamedhipara Vishṇu.

Indication of subtle movement, tender modelling and gliding linearism in the treatment of the body and expressive physiognomy, some of the characteristics of the Gupta sculptural art, are absent from a representation of Vishṇu from Mikirati. It has an expressionless squarish face, broad shoulders and chest and a rigid appearance. However, the treatment of the drapery of this figure is diaphanous. It wears a low turreted crown held by a band set against a high head-gear (partly broken). It holds a lotus (bud ?) and a conch in the two upper hands, and has the two lower hands resting on a wheel and a knotted club (fig. 55). From the point of view of the treatment of the face, the body and the crown, this image can be compared with the figure of Vishṇu from Hankrail[11] (Malda district, West Bengal) (fig. 56) and also perhaps, to some extent, with the two-armed representation of Vishṇu (with Gadādevī and Chakrapurusha) discovered at Kumarpur[12] (Rajshahi district, Bangladesh) (fig. 57). Both the Hankrail and Kumarpur icons can be stylistically dated to the post-Gupta and pre-Pāla period of the history of the areas where they have been found.[13]

C

From the point of view of composition the Mikirati Vishṇu can be compared with an inscribed image of Nārāyaṇa, found at Deopani (Sibsagar district, Assam) and now included in the collection of the Assam State Museum, Gauhati[14] (no. ASM 8) (figs. 58 and 59). The sculpture, made of a stone of blackish colour, is 2′ 11″ high. The image, which stands on a pedestal, is now partly mutilated. The figure is somewhat frontally conceived, the back portion remaining uncarved. There is an inscription of four lines on the back of the sculpture, palaeographically datable to about the 9th century A.D. It refers to the icon as a stone image of Nārāyaṇa.[15]

The figure, the right part of which is partly broken, stands erect to front, with its upper left hand holding a conch and the lower left placed on a knotted club. The upper and lower right hands, which are broken, apparently held a lotus bud and a wheel respectively. It wears, like the image of Vishṇu from Mikirati, a low turreted crown held by a band set against a high headgear. Again, like the Mikirati Vishṇu, the icon in question is adorned with a pair of long ear-rings, a necklace, bangles and a waist-band and also with *śrīvatsa* symbol on the chest. It bears a sacred thread. It is also bedecked with an ornate garland (*vanamālā*), of which the lower portion reaches near about the knees, and the upper portion goes from the front to the back of the body around the upper arms. The style of wearing the *vanamālā* probably developed from that of holding garland by two half-raised hands, as noticeable in several Gupta sculptures (including the representations of Gaṅgā and Yamunā at Dah Parvatiya) (fig. 51), or from the tendency of depicting thick borders (shown around the arms, by the side of the thighs and on the knees) of otherwise diaphanous drapery of numerous figures of the post-Gupta age. The semidiaphanous lower garment of the image concerned, particularly its frill, is treated in a manner reminiscent of the lower dress of the Mikirati, Kakdigihi and Hankrail images mentioned above, and also of several Gupta and even Kushāṇa figures.[16]

The Deopani Nārāyaṇa has a stocky figure and, like the Hankrail and Mikirati icons, broad chest and shoulders. Though its body is smooth and is shown in neatly done high relief, it lacks movement and all the desirable pliability. The physiognomical details, which are most noteworthy, show half-closed eyes, somewhat raised eyebrows (?), high cheekbones, small mouth and thick lips. The graceful serenity, which characterises Gupta icons, is absent from this image, though it betrays lingering influence of a few Gupta stylistic elements.

Non-classical stylistic features are noticeable in a greater degree in another interesting icon found at Deopani and now preserved in the Assam State

Museum, Gauhati (no. ASM 2454). The sculpture, made of a block of stone of blackish colour, is 1′—2″ high and 8″ broad (fig. 60). An inscription on the back of the sculpture, palaeographically datable to c. 9th century A.D. or rather to a little earlier age (c. 8th century), refers to the icon as that of Harihara[17] (fig. 61). According to the record, the image of Harihara was dedicated during the reign of one Mahārājādhirāja (Emperor of Great Kings) Diglekhavarman,[18] whose territory apparently included the Deopani area.

The syncretistic character of the icon, said to be a representation of a combined form of Hari and Hara, is suggested by its attributes and accompanying mounts. A seated *garuḍa* (the mount of Hari) is shown on the left and a recumbent bull (the mount of Hara) on the right of the lower part of the divine figure. The figure itself stands to front on a lotus pedestal. It holds a wheel by the upper left hand, a conch on the palm of the lower left hand, a lance (or trident) by the upper right hand, and a small vase (?) on the palm of the lower right hand which otherwise is in *varada* gesture. It is adorned with a head-dress (partly broken ?), long ear-rings and bangles similar to those worn by the image of Nārāyaṇa mentioned above. It also wears a bejewelled necklace, armlets and a thick sacred thread. The figure is shown either as nude or as wearing a diaphanous garment. In any case, it is, like numerous representations of Śiva, clearly ithyphallic. The icon is bedecked with a complete or incomplete garland (*vanamālā*), of which the lower portion reaches the knees and the upper portions are perhaps intended to be shown as going to the back of the figure over the forearms of the lower hands. The visible portions of the upper parts of the garland, however, fall loose on the right and left of the lower right and left hands respectively. This treatment is reminiscent of that of the garland or string held by the figure of Gaṅgā as well as of Yamunā at Dah Parvatiya.

The chest and shoulders are broad as in the Deopani Nārāyaṇa. But the face of Harihara is more squarish than that of Nārāyaṇa. The eyes are open and the lips are thick. Small mouth and high cheekbones are noteworthy. The ear and palms of hands are disproportionately large and grotesque. The face has almost a weird expression.

The syncretistic icon of Harihara is hewn in very low relief out of a block of stone. There is no attempt at the rounding of the contours. The treatment is more frontal and angular than that of the image of Nārāyaṇa at Deopani. The figure of Harihara is static and rigid and does not indicate any degree of pliability. The image (particularly its squarish face) is so much wooden in appearance that the sculptor concerned seems to have been more familiar with the technique of sculpting image in wood than in stone.

The style of sculpting as betrayed by the figure of Harihara has little in common with the Gupta idiom. Nevertheless, a few features (like the treatment of the string or garland, the shape of the crown, etc.) indicate the sculptor's knowledge of Gupta icons or rather of post-Gupta images created under the influence of the Gupta tradition. Such sculptures treating Brahmanical themes could have even found their way to the Deopani area, which,

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as the evidence of the creation of an image representing both Hari and Hara would suggest, had begun, by the date of its production, to experience the influence of Brahmanical religious cults. The date of the icon, as indicated by the palaeography of the inscription on its back, may be referred to c. 9th or rather 8th century A.D.

The figure of Harihara seems to have been created following an indigenous style at a time when the latter had begun to imbibe some traits of the lingering Gupta tradition. This fusion had taken place by probably sometime of c. 8th century A.D.

Pliability and plasticity are more evident in another sculpture found also at Deopani (fig. 62) and now preserved in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati (no. ASM 2410). It is 2′—10″ high and 1′—1″ broad. Here we can notice attempts to indicate the contours of the body which, though still frontally treated, is more rounded and in higher relief than the image of Harihara. The ears are here more shapely. However, like the Nārāyaṇa and Harihara icons, this sculptured figure also has small mouth, high cheekbones, open eyes, thick lips and broad shoulders and chest.

The figure, which is four-armed, stands to front. It is ithyphallic. It wears at least a lower garment, which is diaphanous. It is adorned with a girdle, bangles, armlets, a necklace with a pendant (resembling *śrīvatsa* symbol), long ear-rings, a sacred thread and a garland (*vanamālā*). The garland is worn in the same fashion as in the case of the image of Nārāyaṇa. The upper left hand holds the stalk of a lotus, while on the palm of the lower left hand appears a conch. The upper right hand grips a trident, while the lower one clasps a rosery. Thus so far the attributes are concerned, the association of this image with Śiva is more pronounced than in case of the icon of Harihara. Interestingly enough, the figure in question has, like many icons of Śiva, a third eye.

The figure has a bejewelled fillet set around its head and held against matted hair arranged in the form of a crown. The head-dress seems to be a combination of *kirīṭa-mukuṭa* and *jaṭā-mukuṭa*. A standing *garuḍa* with folded hands appears on the left and a recumbent bull on the right of the lower part of the image. A figure, resembling a snake, appears on the upper part of the right side of the stela, formed by the block of stone from which the sculpture has been hewn out.

On the right side of the rim of the stela an inscription of three lines is engraved. It records the dedication of the image, apparently referring to it as (that of) Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, during the reign of Mahārājādhirāja Jīvarā[19] (fig. 63). Palaeographically the inscription may be assigned to c. 9th century A.D.[20]

Stylistically the image of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa is more well executed than that of Harihara, though the body of the former is as smooth, rounded or shapely as that of Nārāyaṇa of Deopani. To this group of Deopani sculptures we may also assign an uninscribed figure of Vishṇu (1′—3″ × 1′—2″) found also at Deopani and now on display in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati [no.

ASM 2437 (1)]. The image, which is now headless, is two armed. The right hand holds a lotus, while the left one clasps a conch. A club and a wheel are shown respectively on the right and left of the figure. The icon wears a garland (*vanamālā*) in the same fashion as in the image of Nārāyaṇa.

The figure, which is a little flabby, has, like the other Deopani images, broad chest and shoulders. The volume of its drapery is indicated by prominent folds. The sculpture seems to have been the work of an artist who seems to have more knowledge of the Gupta classical idiom or at least who appears to have felt more impact of the Gupta art tradition on him than the sculptor of the Deopani Harihara.

The four sculptures from Deopani stylistically form a distinct group. The Harihara image seems to be the least affected by the Gupta idiom. It basically represents an indigenous art tradition at the stage of its first contact with lingering traits of Gupta art. The contact was established by about 8th century (the approximate date of the Harihara image). The indigenous style might have its root in an earlier age, and even the above noted contact might have taken place much earlier than the 8th century A.D. If, as suggested above, wood, a perishable material, was one of the main media of expression of this idiom, then we may have an explanation for the absence of its known specimens datable to the Gupta or pre-Gupta age.

The different progressive stages of fusion of the indigenous idioms with the Gupta art tradition are indicated by the Harihara, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, and Nārāyaṇa images. The icon of Nārāyaṇa seems to indicate certain standardised stylistic norms of producing human or divine figures according to this syncretistic idiom. These are (a) frontal and somewhat angular treatment of the fairly well-shaped body shown in a rather stiff or rigid attitude; (b) open eyes, thick lips, broad chest and shoulders, for which the figures are often shorn of the graceful serenity of the Gupta figures; and (c) treatment of drapery (which is often diaphanous) and of garland and ornaments (worn by the figures) in a manner betraying (at least sometimes) influence of the characteristics of Gupta art.

Some or all these characteristics are also shared, as indicated above, by a number of sculptures found outside Deopani and even, though in a lesser degree, by certain icons found outside the limits of Assam. These reflect fusion of local or regional art idioms with the waning or lingering influence of the eastern version of the Gupta (Sarnath) school. Majority of the sculptures concerned (discovered within the limits of Assam) are found in localities which at one time or other were included in Kāmarūpa. Hence this idiom or school may be named after Kāmarūpa.

D

The influence of this idiom or school is discernible in the broad chest and shoulders and stiff attitude of the rock-cut image of Neminātha at Suryapahar

(Goalpara district, Assam) (fig. 64), and in the identical features of the figures of Vishṇu and Śiva in a panel of sculptures in the same locality[21] (fig. 65). One of the representations of Vishṇu, which wears a diaphanous drapery and a garland in the same fashion as the Deopani Nārāyaṇa, has also wide open (rather bulging) eyes and thick lips.

The general composition of the standing figure of Vishṇu can be compared with the representation of the same deity in a sculptured panel on the lintel of a door of a temple unearthed at Bodhgaya[22] (fig. 38). There is also a general similarity between the appearance of the niches in these panels which are adorned with standing icons.

The Bodhgaya panel is dated in the year 26 of the reign of Dharmapāla[23] of the Pāla dynasty of the territory now included in Bangladesh, West Bengal and Bihar. Our knowledge of the Pāla chronology would date the Bodhgaya panel to about the closing decade of the 8th century A.D. The Suryapahar panel may be at least stylistically dated to about the same period. And if the Suryapahar relievos indicate, like the Deopani Nārāyaṇa, a fairly matured stage of the early mediaeval Kāmarūpa idiom or school, its first products may be logically assumed to have come into existence in an appreciably earlier age. In that case, the image of Harihara (of c. 8th century A.D.), which betrays the first stage of development of the idiom or school concerned, may be taken as one of the last examples of the first phase of its stylistic evolution.

Details of the early evolution of this style is no doubt lacking. Nevertheless, we have now enough material to postulate the birth of an early mediaeval Kāmarūpa school or idiom as a result of fusion of an indigenous art style with the lingering traits of the eastern version of the Gupta (Sarnath) school in c. 8th century A.D. or rather in a still earlier age.

E

This art style is, however, not particularly discernible in the majority of the sculptural decors found in the ruins of monuments of Kāmarūpa datable to the period ranging from about the 9th to about the 12th century A.D.[24] Similarly, numerous cult icons, unearthed in the Assam valley and stylistically assignable to a pre-Āhom age (and so to an age prior to c. 13th century A.D.), do not betray affinity to the idiom of art discussed above.

These images are made of black basalt or grayish or blackish stone. Though conceived frontally, majority of them indicate the sculptors' ability to impart to them a sense of depth and dimension. Their gracefully treated fleshy body stand in numerous poses and postures as in the Pāla images of 9-10th century A.D.[25] A few icons, including the one of Sūrya discovered in the Gauhati area (fig. 66), radiate softness and pliability contained in rythmic outlines, bear calm serenity in face and have decorated, though uncrowded, stela. These characteristics are comparable with stylistic traits of icons of the Pāla school datable to c. 9th century A.D.[26] (fig. 19). Pāla figures of the 10th century A.D., particularly of the late 10th century, betray inclination for powerfully robust form within rythmic contours[27] (fig. 15). Their vigorous but disciplined appearances may find comparable counterparts in several sculptures unearthed in Assam including the representations of Brahmā (fig. 67) and Indra (fig. 68) from Gauhati and those of Umā and Maheśvara, set against a single stela, found at Davoka (fig. 69). The figures produced by the Pāla school in the 11th century generally show preference for "a slender body type of concious grace and elegance". "The modelling remains sure and perfect", but the icons seem to indicate development of some kind of mannerism, almost schematic in character[28] (fig. 70). Some of these characteristics may be noticed in some sculptures from Assam, including the icon of Vishṇu from Chandamari (Gauhati district)[29] (fig. 71). The well-formed body of Vishṇu is gracefully treated. But the decoration of the stela and the delineation of the folds of the garment of the figure are somewhat rigid and schematic in appearance. In the Pāla icons of the late 11th and early 12th centuries A.D. we can notice heavy ornamentation of figures and further elaboration of stela, which is sometimes cut along the contours of the main figure, perhaps to give the latter a sense of roundedness and of independence of the stela[30] (figs. 72 and 73). This type of treatment of stela is noticeable in several sculptures discovered in Assam, including the representations of Sūrya and Vishṇu from Davoka (fig. 74) and the icon of Vishṇu from Budhabudhi (fig. 75). These sculptures show great exhuberance in the display of ornaments and in the decoration of stela. Though these have been done with technical skill and efficiency, the overcrowdedness of decorative figures and ornaments stifle the sense of plasticity. Moreover, the deities here are petrified and somewhat rigid in appearance and are singularly lacking in plastic feeling. Interestingly enough, the same features characterise the last stage of the Pāla (or Pāla-Sena school) during the later half of the 12th century A.D. (when the Senas and a few minor Pāla kings ruled)[31] (figs. 17 and 18).

Human figure is the pivot of Pāla sculpture. Among the general characteristics of Pāla sculptures showing deities in human (or semihuman) form we may notice benign appearance of face, careful treatment of ornaments and garments (though not always of the anatomical details of the figures wearing these), gradual elaboration of stela (with the increase in the number and volume of representations of acolytes, flying figures, flora and fauna) and the development of a tendency to use pedestal or plinth of the images in the shape of *ratha* projections.[32] The same stylistic traits are noticeable in the above noted sculptures recovered from areas once in Assam. A type of decoration of stela, noticeable in these as well as Pāla sculptures, shows the the main deity as flanked by two figures and set against a frame displaying *inter alia* a leograph on each side (figs. 19, 71 and 74). A few Kāmarūpa sculptures, including an architectural decor from Gachtal (fig. 75a), represent the deity concerned as placed inside a temple. This feature is noticeable in a number of Pāla sculptures (fig. 16).

Similar stylistic features are discernible in numerous architectural figures found in the ruins of pre-Āhom shrines in the Darrang, Kamrup, Goalpara, Nowgong and Sibsagar districts.[33] Here, however, the figures are produced sometimes in a style which is somewhat freer than that betrayed by cult icons, in which cases iconometric rules often imposed restrictions on spontaneous display of aritists' creative faculty.[34] For examples we can refer to the flying *apsarās* on two blocks of stone found at Numaligarh and the rhythmic dancing scene on an architectural piece discovered in the Sibsagar district. These architectural decors are now in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati.[35]

Bronze icons with stylistic affinity to the Pāla school have been discovered within the territory once included in Kāmarūpa. A few of such sculptures have been unearthed at the site of the Narakasur hill in the suburb of Gauhati.[36] The most outstanding piece shows Indra riding on an elephant standing to front on a pedestal (fig. 76). The deity on the animal is flanked by a female standing on lotus on each side and is shown as being worshipped by a devotee, with folded hands, kneeling on the pedestal. A halo and only the outer rim of a stela are shown behind the deity. The back portion of the elephant has been extended without any difficulty beyond the stela of this type. As a result, this object of art has really become a sculpture in the round. The slender figure of Indra exudes elegance and concious gracefulness. But the folds on his garment, the standing postures of the side figures, etc., are somewhat rigid and schematic in character. All these characteristics are discernible, as noted above, in Pāla sculpture of c. 10th century A.D.

Stylistic affinity to some traits of the Pāla school are betrayed by a few more metal sculptures from the Narakasur hoard including two icons of Avalokiteśvara,[37] one of Tārā, one of Vishṇu and one of Sūrya. Certain traits of the Pāla idiom are discernible also in a representation of Vishṇu, a figure of Garuḍa, an icon of Hārītī, and a sculpture showing two seated female figures (Hārītī and Vasudhārā ?), one holding a child and the other a pot. All these bronze images have been found in a hoard unearthed at Hahara in the Kamrup district. A bronze figure of a deity (Hārītī ?) holding a child, discovered in the Gauhati area, and a representation of the Buddha Muchalinda in metal, reported from Arunachal, indicate stylistic features comparable with certain traits of the Pāla school.[38]

Extension of this style to the terracotta sculpture of early mediaeval Kāmarūpa is perhaps suggested by a few well produced plaques. One of them, said to have been found at Belbari, displays a male figure (representing Kṛishṇa ?) holding a flute.[39]

The stylistic relationship between the above noted sculptures of Kāmarūpa and products of the Pāla school is so great that it is difficult to dissociate one group completely from the other. And since the Pāla idiom can be clearly shown to have evolved in the domain of the Pālas[40] (Chapter II), the art style in question should be considered to have extended its influence from the west of Kāmarūpa (where was the Pāla domain) to Kāmarūpa itself and not in the reverse direction.

No doubt, a few of the sculptures, particularly some of the products in black basalt, might have been imported from the domain of the Pālas and Senas. But the fact that the majority of known sculptures—including architectural sculptures of the pre-Āhom age—exude stylistic affinity to the Pāla idiom should suggest that objects of art were produced following that stylistic norm in Kāmarūpa itself. This hypothesis is also borne out by several figures, physiognomical details of which betray local influences. For examples, we can refer to the figures Umā and Maheśvara found at Gauhati (fig. 69), a representation of Vishṇu, also discovered in the Gauhati area, and a few icons among the finds in the Narakasur hill area. These images were obviously produced in Kāmarūpa following the Pāla idiom.

The feasibility of the hypothesis about the spread of the Pāla idiom in Kāmarūpa is enhanced in the context of our knowledge about the extension of the Gupta art style to that territory from the "west", which in a later time was included in the Pāla empire. We have also evidence of contact between early mediaeval Kāmarūpa and the territories to its west. A Pasupatinath temple inscription claims that Harshadeva (c. A.D. 725-50) (of the family of Śālastambha) was the lord of Gauḍa, Oḍra, Kaliṅga and Kosala.[41] According a theory, Vanamālavarman (c. A.D. 835-865) conquered parts of the territory now included in Bangladesh.[42] Dharmapāla of Kāmarūpa (c. A.D. 1095-1120) made a grant in Dijjināvishaya[43] (to be located in the Dinajpur area, now partly in W. Bengal and Partly in Bangladesh). Jayapāla, the king of Kāmarūpa, made a gift of land situated in a part of Puṇḍravardhana[44] (which as an administrative division often included in the early mediaeval age the greater part of the territory now incorporated in Bangladesh). On the other hand, Jayapāla, a cousin of Devapāla (c. A.D. 812-50) of the Pāla dynasty (of the territory now in Bihar, West Bengal and Bangladesh) had some successful contact with a king of Prāgjyotisha.[45] It appears from the *Rāmacharita* that Rāmapāla (c. A.D. 1072-1126) conquered Kāmarūpa.[46] Vaidyadeva, a minister of Kumārapāla (c. A.D. 1126-28), subdued the revolt of Tiṁgyadeva of the east (= Kāmarūpa ?) and was appointed by Kumārapāla as the king of that territory (=Kāmarūpa ?).[47] According to the Deopara inscription, Vijayasena conquered Kāmarūpa, while the Madhainagar grant gives to Lakshmaṇasena the credit of subduing that territory.[48]

The political contacts (sometimes resulting in bringing Kāmarūpa and a territory to its west under one political hegemony) and evidence of the existence of routes of communication between Kāmarūpa and the territories to its west[49] could have easily facilitated the travel of artists and idiom from the domain of the Pālas and Senas to Kāmarūpa. The fact that the majority of post-Varman and pre-Āhom sculptures, including architectural sculptures from the ruins of pre-Āhom shrines, betray affinity to the Pāla school, should suggest that the artists trained in the idiom concerned had a rich clientele (including perhaps some rulers of the land).

L

Their clientele, however, might not have included all contemporary lovers of art. At least the figures in relief on four bronze plaques, found at the site of the Narakasur hill and now in the Assam State Museum (Gauhati), cannot be stylistically related to the Pāla idiom, though inscriptions on two of these plaques can be palaeographically dated to the 9th to 12th century A.D. or to a period when Kāmarūpa was under the influence of the Pāla school.

One of these oval-shaped plaques (no. ASM 3018) bears in relief a four-armed and ithyphallic male figure standing to front in *samapada* on a tiger (?) walking to left (i.e., to its right) with its head turned to the viewer. The bejewelled figure has matted hair. It wears a sacred thread and a semidiaphanous lower garment. The upper right and lower right hands hold a sword and a rosery respectively. A conch and a disc (?) or a lotus-bud (?) are held respectively by the lower left hand and upper left hand.[50] An inscription, palaeographically datable to a period ranging from c. 9th to 11th or 12th century A.D., can be noticed on the plaque.[51] One line of it appears to the right and another to the left of the figure. It refers to the figure as the image of Vanahari made (?) (i.e., donated ?) by a *rājyapāla* (protector of realm) of Ṇabhāsa (fig. 77).[52] The presence of conch and lotus-bud (?) and, to some extent, also of sword betrays an association with the iconic concept of Hari (Vishṇu). The erect penis of the figure, and the sword held by it, however, may allude to the influence of the iconography of Śiva. Again, the figure stands on a tiger and not on the mount (bull) of Śiva or of Vishṇu (Garuḍa). It appears that Vanahari (Hari of the forest area) was a regional deity conceptually as well as iconographically indebted to different gods.

A two-armed male figure appears in relief on another oval-shaped bronze plaque. The figure stands to front in *samapada* on an ass (or a dog ?) standing to left (i.e., to its right). The figure has matted hair. It wears ornaments and a diaphanous lower garment. The right hand holds a staff (or club), and the left hand grasps a leash binding the animal (or holds a noose falling on the back of it).[53] The plaque bears an inscription, palaeographically datable to c. 9th-11th or 12th century A.D.[54] The inscription, which appears in one line on the right and in two lines on the left of the figure, seems to refer to it as the image of Vijayaka Haradeva[55] (fig. 78). The erect phallus, the stuff and the noose (?) may indicate the Śaiva affiliation of the figure, as does its name (Haradeva). The ass is a local addition. If, howeaer, the mount is identifiable as a dog, we may discern here an influence of the iconographic concept of Baṭuka Bhairava, an associate of Śiva.[56]

The third bronze plaque, recovered from the Narakasur hill area, displays a four-armed, bejewelled and crowned female figure standing to front in *samapada* on a buffalo. The two upper hands hold a trident and a disc, while the two lower hands grasp a staff (?) and a noose or leash to which the mount is tied[57] (fig. 79). We do not know whether the figure is iconographically a regional version of *Mahishāsuramardinī* (the female tormentor as well as the destroyer of demon Mahisha) or Yamī (the female associate of Yama, whose mount is buffalo) or Dhūmrorṇā (the consort of Yama). It may be remembered here that in some early mediaeval representations of the first deity discovered in South India[58] she is shown as standing on the head of the buffalo.

A very interesting figure appears in the fourth bronze plaque discovered at the site of the Narakasur hill. It consists of a helmeted human face, springing from the head of a horned buffallo[59] (fig. 80). As it has already been recognised, this figure is perhaps a representation of the Mahishāsura, i.e., the buffalo demon.[60]

The standing figures have fairly well-shaped bodies with broad chests and shoulders. The treatment of the figures, shown in a stiff and rigid attitude, is angular as well as frontal. The deities in question and also the "buffalo demon" have open eyes, small mouths, thick lips and high cheekbones (figs. 77—80). These stylistic traits relate these iconic representations to the Kāmarūpa idiom or school mentioned above (section C ; figs. 59 and 60). They singularly lack the graceful poses and postures and pliability, which characterise the best products of the Pāla school.[61]

The Kāmarūpa style is reflected also in a number of terracotta plaques found at Kukurmutha, Bhaitbari, Bhismaknagar (Arunachal), Yojijan, etc. (figs. 81—84). Though the figures are generally shown in different poses and postures, as required by the themes of sculpting, they are shorn of gracefulness and are rigid in appearance. The treatment of the figures are so angular that they do not betray any sense of movement, even if they are apparently intended to do so. Thus the dancing trio on a plaque from Kukurmutha (fig. 82) do not indicate any rhythmic movement. Each of these well-proportioned figures seem to be static and frozen in a particular dancing stance.

All these figures have broad chests and thick lips. Their draperies are diaphanous or semidiaphanous.

Not all the terracotta plaques are artistically of the same standard. A few of these, including one from Kukurmutha (fig. 82), can, inspite of their stylistic limitations, be considered as objects of art. Though the quality of work varies from object to object and one region to another, the terracotta sculptures under discussion share certain common stylistic traits which can be related to the above noted Kāmarūpa idiom.

Certain stone sculptures (fig. 85), including architectural sculptures (figs. 86 and 87), show human figures with broad chests and shoulders and small mouths. The treatment of these figures, shown in stiff attitude, is frontal and definitely angular. These traits tend to attribute them to the Kāmarūpa idiom.

The above noted bronze, terracotta and stone sculptures can thus be broadly assigned to the Kāmarūpa idiom, as defined in Sections C and D. The feasibility of a hypothesis suggesting the existence of this idiom in the period ranging from about the 9th to the 12th century A.D. is indicated by the palaeographic features of the bronze plaque inscriptions. However, during this period Kāmarūpa, as pointed out above, also produced a great member of works of art following the Pāla idiom. Thus the two idioms of art existed simultaneously for a fairly long time.

Attention of scholars has already been drawn to certain metal images of early mediaeval age (figs. 88 and 89) found among the archaeological objects in the Narakasur hill area and also in a hoard discovered at Hahara (Kamrup district), which stylistically can be related neither to the Pāla school, nor perhaps to the Kāmarūpa idiom. Two or three icons (one of Chundā, one of Vishṇu and one (?) of Sūrya) unearthed in the Narakasur area and at least three images (one of Vishṇu, one of Ganeśa and one (?) of Chundā) recovered from the Hahara hoard may be considered as stylistically affiliated more to the regional idiom of the domain of the Pāla and Senas (Chapter II, Section E) than to the Kāmarūpa idiom. These icons may be considered as products of the areas of their discoveries, or may be taken as imports brought to those localities from the territory of the Pālas or the Senas. The latter hypothesis is not at all improbable, since all these icons are small in size and portable (Chapter II, Section C). Thus in the present state of our knowledge we can postulate the simultaneous existence of two idioms of art in Kāmarūpa during the period ranging from about the 9th to about the 12th (or 13th) century A.D. The dominant one was the Pāla idiom. The other was the Kāmarūpa idiom.

M

It is interesting to note that several Kāmarūpa kings of the period concerned (and not only one or a few of the earlier age)[62] have been alluded to in epigraphic records as great builders. Epigraphs of Balavarman III (about the last quarter of the 9th and the first decade of the 10th century A.D.), like the Nowgong and Ulubari records, give to Vanamāla (first half of the 9th century A.D.) the credit of erecting a row of palaces consisting of many rooms, decorated with pictures.[63] According to Vanamāla's Tezpur grant, he repaired a fallen temple of Hāṭaka Śūlin (Śiva).[64] The Baragaon inscription speaks of "thousands of whitened (plastered) turrets" in the city of Durjayā, the capital of Ratnapāla (about the first half of the 11th century A.D.).[65] Another inscription states that Ratnapāla "studded the earth with whitewashed temples, enshrining Śambhu."[66] Without further multiplying such examples, it can be presumed that several of the Kāmarūpa monarchs of the age concerned were patrons of art and architecture.[67]

Kāmarūpa's zest for art and architecture during this age is also attested by abundant mass of ruins of monuments found in several areas including the Darrang, Kamrup, Goalpara, Gauhati, Nowgong and Sibsagar districts.[68] These have been dated to pre-Āhom age and to different phases within the broad period ranging from the 9th to the 12th century A.D.[69]

Conditions in Kāmarūpa were perhaps conducive to art activities. This region was (from an earlier age) connected through routes with extra-Indian territories as well as with different parts of the Indian subcontinent (including the areas of Eastern India, lying to its west).[70] The trade and commerce of Kāmarūpa were, as suggested by available data, in a fairly developed stage.[71] This inference is supported by the evidence of the prevalence of some sort of a medium of exchange and also by a number of coins, of which some bear the character *Ha* (=Harjjaravarman) and some display the letter Va (=Vanamālavarman).[72] Under such circumstances traders and industrialists would accumulate profit, and rulers would be able to fulfil their treasuries by *inter alia* levying taxes on articles of trade. Thus the richer section of the society would have enough surplus wealth to spend for building activities and for patronising art. One of the motives for erecting temples or dedicating images was perhaps to acquire religious merit.[73] Such conditions would not only give a boost to local artists but also would attract artists and art objects from the areas with which the region concerned had commercial, cultural and/or political contacts. That similar situation was prevalent in Kāmarūpa is suggested by the discoveries in that territory of sculptures stylistically affiliated to the idiom of the domain of the Pālas and Senas, with which the area concerned had political contacts (see above).

A few of these sculptures could have been imported into Kāmarūpa. But, as pointed out above, the majority were produced there. It is not impossible that initially some artists from the domain of the Pālas and Senas worked in ateliers of Kāmarūpa.

The employment of master sculptors in royal ateliers during or at least in the later phase of the period concerned is indicated by a comparative study of seals of the Kāmarūpa kings. The oval-shaped metal seal of the Doobi grant of Bhāskaravarman (first half of the 7th century A.D.), which measures 8 cms. × 8 cms. × ·10 cm., shows the front portion of an elephant standing on a platform. The elephant, the platform and also the accompanying epigraph appear in shallow relief within slightly raised rim. The pose and posture of the animal are identical with those of the elephant on the Nalanda terracotta seal of the same monarch. The animal on these seals stands to front with its trunk hanging downwards to its right. The contour of the hind portion of its body is juxtaposed to that of the front portion and is separated by an incised line. The hind legs are shown at some distance to the right and left of the front legs (fig 90). In this peculiar representation the natural figure of the animal is distorted. It also betrays a lack of sense of perspective on the part of the sculptor or sculptors responsible for preparing the matrix or matrices from which the seals or seal-impressions were produced. These defects are found accentuated in the representation of the same animal on the seal (10·2 cms. × 10 cms. × ·7 cm) of the Parbatiya grant of Vanamālavarman (9th century A.D.). Moreover, here all the four legs of the animal are shown in a row on the same level. However, the seal betrays a commendable tendency to exhibit its rim and the objects of display in fairly high relief (fig. 91).

The above noted shortcomings are rectified to a great extent in engraving the figure of an elephant (standing on a platform) in a fairly high relief on the seal (10·2 cms. × 10 cms. × ·11 cm.) of the Nowgong plates of Balavarman III (see above). The rim of the seal and also the figure of the animal are very much raised in comparison with those seen on the seals of Bhāskaravarman. The head, trunk and the front feet of an elephant are beautifully and realistically done in really high relief on the metal seal (10·2 cms. × 8 cms. × ·9 cm.) of the Khonamukhi grant of Dharmapāla (late 11th century and early 12th century A.D.). The apparent vivacity of the animal is suggested by projecting the claws of its left front leg out of the platform on which it is shown. The artist or artists concerned are found here to have been able to impart to the figure a subtle sense of movement towards the viewer. The style of displaying the elephant does not indicate the defects apparent in the representations of the same animal on the seals of Bhāskaravarman or Vanamālavarman. The sculptor or sculptors, who prepared the matrix used for producing the seal of the Khonamukhi inscription, apparently mastered the art of foreshortenning. The seal with its very much raised rim testifies not only to the prevalence of an improved art style, but also to the employment of an efficient technique of metal casting. Thus a comparative study of the seals of the Doobi, Parbatiya, Nowgong and Khonamukhi grants, all of which are now in the Assam State Museum (Gauhati), suggests that the artists in the royal ateliers often strove for improving the style and technique of sculptural art and that they achieved excellence by the time of Dharmapāla, if not in a still earlier age.[74]

The quantification of surviving sculptures affiliated to the Pāla school and Kāmarūpa style may suggest that the artists versed with the Pāla idiom enjoyed more effective patronage than their counterparts trained in the Kāmarūpa idiom. How long both the styles flourished is a moot point. The political turmoil created by a series of Muslim invasions in the 13th century beginning with the first (unsuccessful) intrusion in 1205-6 A.D.,[75] and by the appearance of the Āhoms as a military force in the Assam valley in about A.D. 1228[76] must have disturbed peace and perhaps (at least temporarily) hindered economic prosperity. Since political peace and availability of surplus wealth (among a class of people) were prerequisite for uninterrupted growth of art activities, their absence from Kāmarūpa in the 13th century might have spelt danger for the artists of the region. The Āhoms, who were the main political power in the Assam valley in the following centuries, did not also patronise the art activities of the region until they were thoroughly Hinduized. As a consequence the art of Kāmarūpa languished.[77]

Traces of some traits of the Pāla idiom can still be found in a number of later products including a stone icon of Indra (fig. 92), unearthed at Malinithan (datable to c. 13th-14th century A.D.),[78] and some big stone images discovered at Ambari (Gauhati) (assignable to a very late mediaeval age).[79] Similarly in the angular treatment and rigid and grotesque features of some sculptures, datable to the Āhom period (fig. 93),[80] one may wish to see lingering of certain traits of the above discussed Kāmarūpa art style. To pursue the point further will be an unconvincing critique in the present state of our knowledge. There is, however, little doubt that the palmy days for the artists trained in the Pāla idiom or Kāmarūpa style (as noted above) were over by or in the 13th century A.D.

NOTES

[1] S. K. Saraswati, *A Survey of Indian Sculpture* (2nd edition), pp. 122f. and 181f.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 122f.

[3] J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum,* vol. III, *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and Their Successors*, p. 8.

[4] P. C. Choudhury, *History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A.D.*, pp. 46-47 and 145-146.

[5] S. Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, pp. 64f; SIS, pp. 143f; S. K. Saraswati, *Early Sculpture of Bengal* (2nd edition), pp. 47-48.

[6] (*Souvenir*), *Third Anniversary of the Artists' Guild*, Gauhati, 1978, p. 47.

[7] *HCPA*, pp. 147 and 168.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 320, 155, 231, etc.

[9] (Souvenir), *Third Anniversary of the Artists' Guild*, Gauhati, 1978, pp. 47-48.

[10] *ESB*, p. 33; R. C. Majumdar (editor), *The History of Bengal*, vol. I, p. 538; pl. LXI, no. 148. An image of Vishṇu from Narhatta (Bogra district, Bangladesh) may be stylistically dated to the post-Gupta and pre-Pāla period (fig. 40a).

[11] *ESB*, pl. I, no. 4.

[12] *HB*, vol. I, p. 539; pl. LX, no. 147.

[13] S. K. Saraswati discerns features affiliated to Kushāṇa art in the broad and heavy shoulders, raised eyebrows, frontal and linear treatment of the body and diaphanous treatment of drapery (from the neck to the knees) of the Vishṇu image found at Hankrail. S. K. Saraswati also thinks that the icon in question can be compared iconographically with an early Vishṇu image from Taxila, "which is usually assigned to the fourth century *A.D.*" (*ESB*, p. 13). The stylistic features noted here are, however, not peculiar to any school of Kushāṇa art. These can be noticed also in several sculptures of the post-Gupta period or early mediaeval age (see Chapter II). It should also be pointed out that the coarse workmanship of the Taxila image, indicated above, has induced J. H. Marshall to assign it to the early mediaeval period (J. H. Marshall, *Taxila*, vol. I, p. 282, no. 1).

[14] *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81; *Journal of the Assam Research Society*, 1941, vol. VIII, pp. 130-34; K. L. Barua, *Early History of Kāmarūpa*, pl. facing p. 184; *HCPA*, pp. 485f; and pl. V; etc.

[15] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XVIII, p. 330 and pl. This inscription was first edited by K. N. Dikhsit. Later it was commented upon by P. C. Choudhury in one of the issues of the *Weekly Nīlāchala* (1891 Śaka).

[16] A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, figs. 79 and 174; *SIS*, figs. 33 and 77; etc.

[17] The inscription was first noticed by P. C. Choudhury in one of the issues of the *Sāptāhika (Weekly) Nīlāchala* (in the year 1891 Śaka) and later edited by D. C. Sircar (*Journal of Ancient Indian History*, 1976-77, vol. X, pp. 114-115). The epigraph, which contains a few spelling and grammatical mistakes, can be read as follows.

L1 - (An auspicious symbol) *Namaḥ svasti* (I*) *Mahārāddhirājaḥ* (read *Mahārājādhirājaḥ*) *śrī-Di-*
L2 - *glekhavarma-rājye Kākhya-putreṇa Hariṇarāmenaḥ*
L3 - *Hariharaḥ* I *Pratimā dattetī* (II*)

The inscription can be translated as follows.

"Salutation; may it be well with (one). (This) image (of) Harihara is given (i.e., installed) by Hariṇarāma, the son of Kākhya, during the reign of (or in the kingdom of) Mahārājādhirāja the illustrious Diglekhavarman".

K. N. Dikshit has observed that the characters of the inscription on the Nārāyaṇa image from Deopani are "acute-angled" and that they belong "to the eastern variety prevalent in the ninth century A.D. over the larger portion of Northern India" (*EI*, vol. XVIII, p. 330). D. C. Sircar thinks that the characters of the inscription on the the image of Harihara are "assignable roughly to the 9th century A.D." (*JAIH*, 1976-77, vol. X, p. 114). The form of the letter *ṇa* in 1.4 of the first inscription seems to be more developed than that of the first *ṇa* in 1.2 of the second inscription. Again *ha* of the words *Hariṇarāmenaḥ* and *Hariharaḥ* of the second inscription is slightly less developed than the form of the same letter occurring in the first inscription (which is, however, favourably comparable with the appearance of that character in the l. 1 of the first inscription). These considerations and a general comparative study of the palaeographic features of these two records suggest that though there is no inherent difficulty in assigning both of them to c. 9th century A.D. (see also T. P. Verma, *Development of Script in Ancient Kāmarūpa*, pll. V-VII), the inscription on the Harihara image may be slightly earlier in date than that on the Nārāyaṇa icon. So the inscription on the image of Harihara may be tentatively referred to c. 8th century A.D.

[18] See above n. 17.

[19] The inscription can be read as follows.

L1 - (An auspicious symbol) *Namaḥ* I *Mahārājādhirāja śrī-Jīvarā-rājyeḥ* I *Guruḥ Kumaḍhabadi saṁpaṁ-*

L2 - *nnā* (read *sampannā*) - *vipanā* - *śishya Tapasvīkiyāḥ sutaḥ* I *Ādau nāma Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa*

L3 - *kīrttanaḥ* I (An auspicious symbol) *Valāhidi nāmakaṁ śailātai likhidaḥ* II (An auspicious symbol).

A tentative translation of the inscription, which is written in very much imperfect Sanskrit, can be made as follows.

"Salutation. During the reign (or in the kingdom) of Mahārājādhirāja the illustrious Jīvarā. The teacher, Kumaḍhabadi, the disciple of excellent (or perfect) Vipanā (and) the son of Tapasvikī. Praising the name (of) Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa (or Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa) in the beginning. Written by the stone obtainer (i.e., stone engraver or stone sculptor) (or the mountaineer or the attendant on the idol) called Valāhidi".

It seems that the image by the side of which the inscription occurs is alluded to as that of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa. It was perhaps dedicated by Kumaḍhabadi (Kumārabodhi).

The forms of the letters *ja*, *ṇa*, etc., are less developed than those of the same letters in the epigraph on the image of Nārāyaṇa from Deopani. Hence the epigraph in question may be palaeographically placed little earlier than the inscription on the icon of Nārāyaṇa, datable to c. 9th century A.D. So the former can be tentatively dated to c. 9th or late 8th century A.D.

[21] *JARS*, 1960, vol. XIV, pp. 110-111.

[22] R. D. Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, pl. I, no. (a).

[23] *Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. IV, p. 102.

[24] These ruins have been found in the Darrang, Gauhati, Kamarupa, Goalpara, Nowgong and Sibsagar districts. In this connection see *HCPA*, pp. 461f.

[25] *HB*, vol. I, p. 537; *SIS*, pp. 188f.

[26] For examples, see the representation of Balarāma of the period of Devapāla (c. A.D. 812-50), and of Tārā of the year 35 of Devapāla's reign, and the two icons of the Buddha of the year 3 Śūrapāla's rule (c. A.D. 850-858). See also the figure of Pārvatī of the year 54 of Nārāyaṇapāla's rule (c. A.D. 858 or 860-917) and that of Tāra of the time of the Pratīhāra king Mahendrapāla, found in Eastern India. In this connection see also *SIS*, p. 189.

[27] For examples, we can refer to the representations of Umā and Maheśvara of the year 32 of Rājyapāla's rule (c. A.D. 917-52), the icon of Vasudhārā of the same year, the image of Vāgīśvarī of the year 1 of the reign of Gopāla II (c. A.D. 952-72) and the figure of Vishṇu of the regnal year 3 of Mahīpāla I (c. A.D. 977-1027). See also *SIS*, p. 189.

[28] *SIS*, p. 189. For examples, we may cite the evidence of the representation of Chundā of the regnal year 31 of Mahīpāla I, and of the figures of the Buddha of the regnal years 3, 13 and 19 of Vigrahapāla III (c. A.D. 1043-70).

[29] The treatment of the well-formed and developed body of the figure of Vishṇu, found at Chandamari, sometimes reminds one of the Baghaura image of Vishṇu of the regnal year 3 of Mahīpāla I (*EISMS*, pl. IV, no. d).

[30] For examples, we may refer to the representation of Tārā of the regnal year 2 of Rāmapāla (c. A.D. 1072-1126), the figure of Bodhisattva of the regnal year 42 of Rāmapāla and the icon of Pārvatī of the regnal year 3 of Madanapāla (A.D. 1143-62).

[31] *SIS*, p. 189. For examples, we may refer to the representation of Chaṇḍī (?) of the regnal year 3 of Lakshmaṇasena and the figure of Pārvatī of the year 14 of Govindapāla and the year 1232 of the Vikrama Samvat (A.D. 1174).

[32] *HB*, pp. 535f ; *EISMS*, pll. 1f.

[33] *HCPA*, pp. 461f ; *Bulletin of the Assam State Mūseum*, 1978, vol. III, pp. 92f ; P. D. Chaudhury, *Archaeology in Assam*, pp. 32f.

[34] Prof. S. K. Saraswati has discussed the style of architectural sculpture of Kāmarūpa in his chapter on art and architecture to be published in the History of Assam, vol. I, under the editorship of Prof. H. K. Barpujari.

[35] The accession numbers of the Numaligarh pieces are ASM 56 and 57.

[36] For discussions on the finds in the Narakasur hill area see *JARS*, 1962, vol. XVI, pp. 57-59 ; 1970, vol. XIX, pp. 23-34.

[37] *JARS*, 1970, vol. XIX, fig. 9. See also fig. 11.

[38] All these bronze icons are now preserved in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati.

[39] Our attention to this piece of sculpture was drawn by Sri B. De of the Department of History, Gauhati University.

[40] *HB*, pp. 538ff.

[41] R. Gnoli, *Nepalese Inscriptions in Gupta Characters*, pt. I, p. 117.

[42] *HCPA*, p. 238.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 261.

[44] *EI*, vol. XIII, p. 289.

[45] A. K. Maitra, *Gauḍa Lekha-mālā*, p. 58.

[46] Sandhyākaranandī, *Rāmacharitam* (edited by H. P. Shastri and revised by R. G. Basak), ch. III, v. 8 ; p. 76.

[47] A. K. Maitra, *op. cit.*, p. 131 ; R. C. Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, pp. 156-157 ; *HCPA*, pp. 270-271.

[48] N. G. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol. III, pp. 48 and 111 ; *HAB*, p. 232.

[49] *HCPA*, pp. 384f.

[50] *JARS*, 1970, vol. XIX, p. 31 and fig. 16.

[51] Compare the forms of the letters appearing in this inscription with those of the same letters noticeable in Kāmarūpa inscriptions datable to the suggested period (T. P. Verma, *Development of Script in Ancient Kāmarūpa*, Tables VIIf.).

[52] The inscription can be read as follows :—

(1.1) *Ṇabhāsasya rājyapāla* (1.2) (*Krara*) *devatā Vana-Har*(*r*)*i pratimā II*.

[53] *JARS*, 1970, vol. XIX, p. 31.

[54] See above n. 51.

[55] The inscription is too fragmentary to admit of definite translation. The expression *Vijayaka Haradeva* occurs in the third line of the inscription.

[56] T. A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. II, pt. I, p. 177 and pl. XLI.

[57] *JARS*, 1970, vol. XIX, p. 30 and fig. 15.

[58] T. A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 341 and pll. XCIX and CI.

[59] *JARS*, 1970, vol. XIX, p. 30 and fig. 14.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 30. It has been claimed that the representation of the buffalo demon is comparable with the iconic type betrayed by several sculptures from north Kachar hills (ibid.. f.n. 21b ; R. M. Nath, *Background of Assamese Culture*, pl. XXVI).

[61] A few of the bronze icons yielded by a hoard found at Hahara (Kamrup district) may be stylistically affiliated to the Kāmarūpa idiom. For an example, we may refer to a representation of Sūrya.

[62] See below n. 67.

[63] Nowgong grant, v. 14 (P. Bhattacharyya, *Kāmarūpa-Śāśanāvalī* (in Bengali), p. 75) ; Ulubari record, v. 14 (*Bulletin of the Assam State Museum*, 1978, vol. III, p. 80).

[64] Tezpur grant, v. 24 (P. Bhattacharyya, *op. cit.*, p. 62).

[65] Baragaon grant, lines 31-32 (P. Bhattacharyya, *op. cit.*, p. 96).

[66] Gauhati grant, v. 10 (P. Bhattacharyya, *op. cit.*, p. 120).

[67] Among the earlier Kāmarūpa kings, Sthiravarman, as it appears from the Doobi plates, founded a new capital on the holy river (i.e., the Brahmaputra) (*JARS*, 1974, vol. XXII, p. 6).

[68] *EHK*, pp. 105f ; *HCPA*, pp. 461f.

[69] See n. 68.

[70] *HCPA*, pp. 378f.

[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 386 ; *EHK*, pp. 185f.

[72] *HCPA*, pp. 387f. See also R. D. Chaudhury, "On the Newly Discovered Coins from Dhulapadung T. E." and D. C. Sircar, "Money in Pre-Ahom Assam and its Neighbourhood", J. P. Singh and N. Ahmed (editors), *Coinage and Economy of North-Eastern States of India*, pp. 1f and (7f).

[73] From other parts of India we have numerous instances of installation of cult icons for the purpose of acquiring religious merit.

[74] For the photograph of a royal seal displaying an elephant, see the frontispiece in *EHK*.

[75] *EHK*, pp. 200f ; *HCPA*, pp. 275-277.

[76] E. Gait, *A History of Assam*, pp. 77f.

[77] R. M. Nath is of the opinion that the style of execution betrayed by the Nārāyaṇa image found at Deopani "definitely" follows "the Utkala tradition" (*JARS*, 1941, vol VIII, p. 133 ; see also vol. IX, p. 33), But the icon does not display any feature peculiar to Utkala (Orissa). Our analysis clearly shows that it should be assigned to a regional idiom of Kāmarūpa, where it has been discovered (see above). Again, K. N. Dikshit was entirely wrong when he stated that "the affinities of Assamese art would seem to be more with the schools of Bihar and Orissa than with the contemporary Pāla art of Bengal" (*Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1927-28, pp. 112-113 ; see also B. K. Barua, *A Cultural History of Assam*, p. 195). The Kāmarūpa art of the early mediaeval age experienced, to a great extent, the influence of the Pāla idiom, which had originatd in the domain of the Pālas. The kingdom of the Pālas included not only parts of "Bengal", but also of Bihar.

[78] *Reśarun*, '75, (Shillong, 1976), p. 7 and the second figure facing p. 3.

[79] Some small stone images unearthed also at Ambari may be stylistically dated to an age which experienced the influence of the Pāla idiom in Kāmarūpa.

[80] Two metal icons in the Assam State Museum show angular and rigid treatment of the figures of the deities concerned. On grounds of their stylistic features (and details of the treatment of dress), they can be assigned to very late mediaeval age. R. D. Chaudhury has assigned one to c. 16th and the other to c. 18th century A.D. (*JARS*, 1974, vol. XXII, pp. 32-34 ; see also *ibid.*, pp. 40f).

CHAPTER FOUR

Epilougue

The above study of the materials for reconstruction of the history of sculptural art in two regions of the eastern division of the Indian subcontinent during the early mediaeval age bears out certain striking results. It is now obvious that each of these regions witnessed more than one trend in sculptural style during that period. In the domain of the Pālas and Senas a regional idiom flourished along with the recognised Pāla school during the period ranging from about the middle of the 8th to about the beginning of the 13th century A.D. The Pāla idiom extended its sway to Kāmarūpa (now in Assam) by about the 9th century A.D. A Kāmarūpa style, which had already come into vogue, continued to exist up to the 12th century A.D. or about the first quarter of the 13th century A.D., if not still later. Objects of art affiliated to the regional style of the domain of Pālas and Senas might have been imported into and also produced in Kāmarūpa.

These inferences suggest the feasibility of simultaneous existence of two art trends in one region. The discoveries of terracotta objects of "ageless" type and also of those following a "time-bound"style at the same levels of occupation at different archaeological sites have already demonstrated the practicability of pursuance of two different styles (apparently by two different groups of artists) in terracotta art in one single zone and period.[1] Even the terracotta objects betraying "time-bound" traits may not have sometimes followed the more well-known art idiom of the age of their production. Thus the terracotta figurines of Maurya date can hardly be assigned to the style reflected in the majestic stone sculptures of the Maurya empire.[2] Our study shows that the difference in stylistic approach is discernible not only among products in terracotta or between terracotta pieces and stone artifacts of an age, but also in objects pertaining to other media of art—including stone and metal. This hypothesis is further supported by the evidence about the popularity of two or more schools of painting in one single area in modern age. For an example, we can refer to the production of paintings in Calcutta following the Kalighat folk style, the "neo-Bengal" school of Abanindranath and "western" traits.[3]

The materials of sculptural art in different regions of India should now be re-examined in the light of our knowledge that the emergence of a highly organised school in an area does not necessarily mean the extinction of any other trend of art in that territory. A "popular" trend can exist "closely paralleling a great tradition".[4] Indian art should be viewed in this perspective. Art is a splendent expression of creative mind. Two or more simultaneous sculptural styles or trends in one area will only add to its brightness.[5]

NOTES

[1] S. Kramrisch, "*Indian Terracottas*", *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, 1939, vol. VII, pp. 89-90 and 105 ; S. K. Saraswati, *A Survey of Indian Sculpture* (2nd edition), pp. 104f ; S. N. Sahay "Terracottas of Bihar" [(B. P. Sinha, (editor), *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 630 ; etc.)]

[2] SIS, pp. 28f and 107f ; N. R. Ray, *Maurya and Post-Maurya Art, A Study in Social and Formal Contrast*, pp. 72f.

[3] S. K. Saraswati, *Indian Art at the Cross-Roads*, pp. 46f and 56f.

[4] *Bangladesh Lalitkalā*, 1975, vol. I, no. 2, p. 112.

[5] Minor regional variations may be noticed even in cases of objects produced by one single school in different districts covered by it. For relevance of this remark to the products of the Pāla school, see the articles by E. Haque and S. L. Huntington published in *BL*, 1975, vol. I.

Appendix One

ŚRĪ-VASUDHĀRĀ

There is an interesting bronze image of a female deity in the collection of Prof. S. K. Saraswati of Calcutta. The height of the image is 18.5 cms. The deity is shown as seated in adamantine posture (*vajraparyaṅka*) on the pericarp of a single petalled lotus resting on a rectangular pedestal with recessing tiers. The goddess, who sits to front, wears only a lower garment. She is adorned with a girdle, bangles, armlets, earrings and a bejewelled thread. Her hair is raised in a neat chignon, clasped by an ornamented tiara, with locks of hair falling down the shoulders. A lozenge-shapped object (a jewel ?) is shown on the open palm of her right hand which rests on her right knee in boon-offering (*varada*) gesture. Her left hand, which rests on the seat besides her left thigh, with the palm faced downwards, holds by its thumb and the first finger a sprout of corn (*dhānya-mañjarī*) (fig. 1).

On the right side of the pedestal we can notice a recumbent iguana (*godhā* or *godhikā*). The front of the pedestal bears an inscription in the proto-Bengali script, which can be read as *Śī-deviḥ* (i.e., *Śrī-devī*) (fig. 1) (see also above p. 5).

The stela behind the goddess is somewhat elliptical in shape, with the lower portion of the ellipse, which unusually curve inwards, terminating before its completion. The edge of the ellipse has four decorated bands. The ellipse is topped by a parasol with streamers.

On the lower portion of the back of the stela appears a round inscribed object looking like a seal. The inscription is illegible. However, we may safely presume, on the analogy of similar inscribed objects on images, that it purports to bear a Buddhist formula[1] (fig. 1a).

The form of the letter *śa*, with its upper portion broken into two parts, points to a date not earlier than the 9th century A.D., when such a feature of this letter became discernible.[2] On the other hand, the old and short form of medial *e*, attached to the letter *da*, does not favour a date later than the 11th-12th century A.D.[3] Thus the palaeographic features of the pedestal inscription indicate, though these do not conclusively prove, that the image may be dated to sometime in the 9th-12th century A.D. The image seems to have been produced, as the general palaeographic features of the inscription should suggest, somewhere in or near the territories now included in Bangladesh, West Bengal and Bihar. It is known to have been discovered in the Chittagong district (Bangladesh).

It is interesting to note that the stela of the image is very sparsely decorated in contrast to the highly ornamented stelae of sculptures of the Pāla and Sena periods (8th-12th or early 13th century A.D.).[4] Though the contours of the body of the image are prominent, its modelling is coarser than the modelling of the great number of icons assigned to the Pāla or Pāla-Sena school of sculpture. These features and the physiognomical details, showing out-turned lips, raised eye-brows and open, almost bulging, eyes, tend to assign this icon to the idiom discussed in Chapter II. As noted above, this art style flourished in *inter alia* the Pāla and Sena periods in the northern, south-eastern and eastern regions of the territory now included in Bangladesh and also in certain areas now within the limits of South Bihar.

Most of the known icons produced following this idiom belong to the Buddhist pantheon. The object on the back of the icon, simulating an inscribed seal, also distinguishes the image, as indicated above, as that of a Buddhist deity. In fact, there is some similarity between the attributes of the deity in question and those of Vasudhārā, the Buddhist goddess of wealth. According to one of her *dhyānas* (mental representations of the forms and attributes of the deity concerned), Vasudhārā should be conceived *inter alia* as adorned with all types of ornaments, as carrying a sprout of corn (*dhānya-mañjarī*) in her left hand and as having her right hand shown in boon-offering (*varada*) gesture.[5] The female figure in question bears all these features. No doubt, the deity concerned does not carry Akshobhya as enjoined also in the above mentioned *dhyāna*.[6] But that she, like Vasudhārā, is associated with wealth is also suggested by the jewel-like object on the palm of her right hand. Again, if the animal on the pedestal is taken as a mongoose, it may be identified with the creature which is sometimes shown in sculptures as held in one of the hands of the Buddhist god of wealth, Jambhala, and as vomiting or showering jewels.

The inscription on the pedestal of the image suggests its identification with Śrī (or Lakshmī), the Brahmanical goddess of wealth. The sprout of corn and the jewel-like object, held by the image, also support the deity's association with wealth.

No doubt, *godhā* or iguana, which (and not mongoose) seems to appear on the pedestal of the image, is not associated with Śrī (Lakshmī) by any of her known concepts. But the same animal has been considered as the mount of the virgin goddess Gaurī.[7] One of the forms of Gaurī is called Śrī.[8] Śrī has been described as seated on iguana, holding a rosary and a lotus flower and having (her hands held) in gestures of assuring security (*abhaya*) and offering boon (*vara*).[9]

The deity in question is also associated with iguana. Though she does not hold either rosary or lotus, one of her hands is held in a gesture of offering boon. Moreover, the pedestal inscription clearly describes her as Śī (Śrī).

It appears that the maker of the image in question wanted the deity to be known as Śrī. In doing that he or she was certainly influenced by the concept of the Śrī form of the Brahmanical goddess Gaurī. On the other hand, the raised portion on the back of the stela, simulating a round inscribed seal, surely assigns the image, as pointed out above, to the Buddhist pantheon. These apparently contradictory tendencies can be reconciled only by the hypothesis that here we have an instance of the adoption of a Brahmanical deity in Buddhist pantheon .

The sprout of corn and the object looking like a jewel, held by the deity in question, distinguish her as the goddess of wealth, though she does not carry all the attributes of either the Brahminical goddess (Śrī) or the Buddhist goddess (Vasudhārā) of wealth. The obvious similarity between the concepts of these two deities probably led to the induction of Śrī into Buddhist pantheon. But in course of taking Śrī into Buddhist fold the maker of the image was influenced by the Śrī form of the Brahmanical goddess Gaurī.

Here we have not only an instance of syncretism,[10] but also an example of adoption of a goddess along with her name by a cult to which she did not primarily belong.

This inference indicates a special trend in the religious movements in the zone and period which produced the image in question. Such instances are rare, but definitive, and, therefore, are of great importance for writing the history of religious movements in India.[11]

NOTES

[1] *Sundaram* (in Bengali), vol. III, no. 1, 1365 B.S., pp. 140-142.

[2] G. Bühler, *Indische Paläographie*, table V, col. IV, 39 and col. XI, 39 ; A. Maitra, *Gauḍa Lekhamālā* (in Bengali), pl. facing p. 45, l. 19.

[3] G. Bühler, *op. cit.*, table III, col. IX, 23 ; table VI, col. XI, 22 ; A. Foucher, *Étude sur L'iconographie Bouddhique de L'Inde*, pl. VIII, no. 4 ; T. P. Verma, *Development of Script in Ancient Kāmarūpa*, tables XXIII-XXIV.

[4] R. C. Majumdar (editor), *History of Bengal*, vol. I, pp. 535f ; pll. LXIX f.

[5] *Vasudhārāṁ bhagavatīm dhyāyāt kanakavarṇāṁ sakalālaṁkāravatīṁ dvirashṭavarshākṛitiṁ dakshiṇakareṇa varadāṁ vāmakareṇa dhānyamañjarīdharāṁ Akshobhyadhāriṇīṁ* [*Sādhanamālā* (edited by B. Bhattacharyya), no. 213].

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] T. A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 113 and 119.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

[9] *Akshaśūtraṁ padmamabhayaṁ cha varaṁ tathā godhāsanāśritā* (read-*śriyāḥ*) *mūrtirgṛihe pūjyā śriye sadā* (*Rūpamaṇḍana* quoted in *EHI*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 120 ; See also the *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa*).

[10] For the history of the development of syncretistic tendencies in Indian iconography, see J. N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography* (2nd edition), pp. 540f.

[11] For the religious movements in the territories now included in West Bengal and Bangladesh during the Pāla and Sena periods, see *HB*, vol. I, pp. 394f and pp. 425f.

Appendix Two

ICONIC TRAITS OF TWO INSCRIBED SCULPTURES

Numerous Indian epigraphs of early and early mediaeval ages record dedication of icons and shrines. Sometimes inscriptions on (pedestal, or stela, or body of) deities refer to them by name. The importance of such references can hardly be overestimated. They not only help us to identify correctly the images concerned, but also allow us to determine the degree of correspondance between the plastic representations of the relevant deities and the available textual descriptions of their iconic forms.

The significance of this observation is borne out by two inscribed images, found at Deopani in the Sibsagar district of Assam and now preserved in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati. We have already recorded stylistic and iconic features of these sculptures and have also furnished our readings and translations of the inscriptions borne by them. Nevertheless, we are recapitulating them here for the sake of a meaningful discussion on the degree of correspondance between the appearances of these icons and relevant descriptions in iconographical texts.

One of these sculptures (no. ASM 2454), made of a block of stone of blackish colour, is 1′-2″ high and 8″ board. The subject of the sculpture is a four-armed male figure standing erect to front on a lotus pedestal. It holds a wheel by the upper left hand, a conch on the palm of the lower left hand, a lance (or trident) by the upper right hand and a small vessel (?) on the palm of the lower right hand, displayed in *varada* pose. The figure has a third eye on the forehead. It wears a low turreted crown held by a band, and is bedecked with a garland (*vanamālā*), a thick sacred thread, a bejewelled necklace, armlets and earrings. The figure is shown either as nude or as wearing a diaphanous garment. In any case, it is clearly ithyphallic. A seated *garuḍa* (with a human face and the body of a bird) is noticeable on the left and a recumbent bull on the right of the lower part of the divine figure (fig. 60).

An inscription, palaeographically datable to the 9th century A.D. or a little earlier (C. A.D. 8th century), appears on the back of the stela of the image. It may be read as follows[1] (fig. 61).

L1 - (An auspicious symbol) *Namaḥ svasti* (I*) *Mahārāddhirājaḥ* (read *Mahārājādhirājaḥ*) *śrī-Di-*

L2 - *glekhavarma-rājye Kākhya-putreṇa Hariṇarāmenaḥ*

L3 - *Hariharaḥ* I *Pratimā datteti* (II*)

The inscription can be translated as follows :—

"Salutation; may it be well with (one). This image (of) Harihara is given (i.e., installed) by Hariṇarāma, the son of Kākhya, during the reign of (or in the kingdom of) Mahārājādhirāja the illustrious Diglekhavarman".

The inscription obviously identifies the image as that of Harihara. As the name suggests, Harihara represents a syncretistic deity, coalescing the concepts of Hari, i.e., Vishṇu, and Hara, i.e., Śiva.[2] The appellation *Harihara* and analogous ones alluding to syncretistic concepts involving Vishṇu and Śiva appear in the descriptions of representations of various deities in several Indian iconographic texts. Thus, while the expression *Harihara* occurs in the *Vishṇu-dharmottara*,[3] the *Śilparatna*[4] and a few other texts,[5] such terms as *Harirardha*,[6] *Haryardha*,[7] *Śivanārāyaṇa*,[8] *Hariśaṁkara*[9] and *Kṛishṇaśaṁkara*[10] appear in other iconographic lists.[11] All these names excepting perhaps *Harirardha* and *Haryardha* envisage icons incorporating, in equal measures, the characteristics of Vishṇu and Śiva. No doubt, the Hari aspect of the syncretistic deity is stressed upon by the expressions *Harirardha* and *Haryardha* (both literally meaning "the half of Hari") and also by the references in the *Agni-purāṇa* to Hariśaṁkara as a form of Hari and as belonging to "the troop of Hari".[12] Nevertheless, the majority of the available descriptions of Harirardha, Haryardha and Hariśaṁkara leave no room to doubt that the icons concerned were (originally) purported to display, in equal proportions, the characteristic features of Vishṇu and Śiva. In fact, the *Agni-purāṇa* itself explicitly states that (the icon of) Hariśaṁkara should possess "the characteristics of Rudra and of Keśava".[13]

The right and left portions of the images concerned are considered in a number of texts as representing respectively Hara (or Śiva) and Hari (or Vishṇu).[14] The deity, known under the names mentioned above, is generally described as four-armed.[15] But there are variations between texts regarding the cognizances to be held by the hands.[16]

It appears that in the early mediaeval age, to which most of the relevant iconographic lists should be dated, there was a well-known deity which assimilated the characteristics of Vishṇu and Śiva. The composite deity, whose concept could have originated in the early centuries of the Christian era,[17] became known under various names in the early mediaeval period. Variances between textual descriptions of the cognizances, etc., of the relevant icons indicate that there was no universally accepted iconic formula and hence form of this composite deity. The textual variations as well as the evidence of a number of extant images (recognisable as those of this syncretistic deity)[18] perhaps reflect regional inclinations.

The image under discussion assumes significance in the light of these observations. As enjoined in the *Vishṇudharmottara,* the bull (the mount of Śiva) and Garuḍa (the mount of Vishṇu) appear respectively on the right and left of the deity, who is referred to in the inscription as well as in that treatise as Harihara. However, the cognizances held by the image of Harihara do not correspond exactly to the descriptions of the attributes given in texts. This icon holds (as required of Harihara in the *Vishṇudharmottara* (?), *Śilparatna,* and *Tantrasāra* and of Śivanārāyaṇa in the *Matsya-purāṇa*) a disc (or wheel) and a conch in two left hands and a lance (*śūlā*) or trident (*triśūlā*) in the upper right hand and also shows the other (lower) right hand in *varada* pose.[19] But additionally the image in question holds a vessel on the palm of the lower right hand, shown in *varada* pose. If the vessel stands for a *kamaṇḍalu* (water-jar), it can be recognised as an attribute of Śiva.[20] Similarly, the third eye on the forehead of the image in question and its erect phallus may be taken as cognizances of the same deity.[21] It is interesting to add that at least according to the *Vāmana-purāṇa,* an icon of this composite god (called by it as Hariśaṁkara) should have two and half eyes (and so should display the third eye).[22] An ithyphallic image, now preserved in the Indian Museum (Calcutta), has been sought to be identified as a representation of Harihara.[23]

It appears that the icon under discussion does not exactly correspond to any of the textual descriptions or perhaps to any of the known representations of the syncretistic deity involving Vishṇu and Śiva. It may then be taken as reflecting a local or regional icono-plastic conception of a form of that composite god. The inscription on the back of the stela of the image obviously refers to this form as Harihara. Had there been no reference to it in the epigraph concerned, it would have been impossible for us to be sure about the exact name by which it was known in the area where it was dedicated, though we could have recognised it, with the help of the attributes, as a syncretistic icon involving Vishṇu and Śiva.

The usefulness of an epigraph on an icon for the purpose of identifying it is further demonstrated by another stone image, found at Deopani in the Sibsagar district of Assam and now preserved in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati. The sculpture (no. ASM 2410), which displays a male figure, is 2′-10″ high and 1′-1″ broad.

The figure, which is four-armed and has a third eye, stands erect to front. It is ithyphallic. It wears at least a lower garment, which is diaphanous. It is adorned with a girdle, bangles, armlets, a necklace with a pendant (resembling *śrīvatsa* symbol), long earrings, a sacred thread and a garland (*vanamālā*). It wears an elaborate head-dress consisting of a bejewelled fillet placed around the head and held against matted hair arranged in the form of a crown. The head-dress seems to be a combination of *kirīṭa-mukuṭa* and *jaṭā-mukuṭa.*

The upper left hand of the figure holds the stalk of a half-opened lotus, while on the palm of the lower left hand appears a conch. The upper right hand grips a trident, and the lower one, shown roughly in *varada* pose, clasps a rosary.

A standing *garuḍa* with folded hands appears on the left and a recumbent bull on the right of the lower part of the divine figure. A snake (?) can be noticed on the upper part of the right side of the stela, formed by a block of stone from which the sculpture has been hewn out (fig. 62).

The right side of the rim of the stela bears an inscription, palaeographically datable to c. 9th or late 8th century A.D.[24] (fig. 63). The epigraph, which consists of three lines, can be read as follows :—

L1 - (An auspicious symbol) *Namaḥ* I *Mahārājādhirāja śrī-Jīvarā-rājyeḥ* I *Guruḥ Kumaḍhabadi saṁpaṁ-*

L2 - *-nnā (sampannā)-vipanā-śishya Tapasvīkiyāḥ sutaḥ* I *Ādau nāma Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa*

L3 - *kīrttanaḥ* I (An auspicious symbol) *Valāhidi nāmakaṁ śailātai likhidaḥ* II (An auspicious symbol)

The inscription is written in very much imperfect Sanskrit. Perhaps influence of a local dialect and its phonetical peculiarities are traceable in spellings and forms of certain words. A tentative translation of the inscription can be made as follows :—

"Salutation. During the reign (or in the kingdom) of Māhārājādhirāja the illustrious Jīvarā. The teacher, Kumaḍhabadi, the disciple of excellent (or perfect) Vipanā (and) the son of Tapasvikī. Praising the name (of) Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa in the beginning. Written by the stone-obtainer (i.e., stone engraver or stone sculptor) (or mountaineer or the attendant on the idol) called Valāhidi."

The epigraph obviously refers to the image, on the rim of the stela of which it is inscribed, as Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa (or Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa). It was perhaps dedicated by Kumaḍhabadi (Kumārabodhi) during the reign (or in the kingdom) of Jīvarā.

Certain cognizances noticeable in the sculpture concerned, like the *jaṭā-mukuṭa*, trident, rosary, third eye, erected phallus, bull and snake (?) allude to the Śaiva affiliation of the image.[25] On the other hand, the *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*, lotus, conch and Garuḍa emphasise its Vaishṇava aspect.[26] So there is no difficulty in recognising the icon as a manifestation of a form of the syncretistic deity involving Śiva and Vishṇu, though all the details do not correspond to those of a single form of the composite deity described in iconographic texts.[27]

The accompanying inscription throws further light on the form of the syncretistic icon displayed by the sculpture in question. The epigraph describes this form as Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa. It appears that the deity with all the attributes noted above was known as Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa (or Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa) in the area where the image was dedicated. Known treatises on iconography do not ascribe the name *Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa* to any one of the forms of the syncretistic deity described by them.[28] The epigraph adds a new appellation to the list of names of the deity incorporating characteristics of Vishṇu and Śiva.[29]

The icons of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa and Harihara constitute two important pieces of evidence of popularity of syncretistic deities in the early mediaeval Kāmarūpa.[30] They indeed throw revealing light on the development of syncretistic iconography in India.[31]

NOTES

[1] The inscription was noticed by Prof. P. C. Choudhury (in one of the issues of the *Sāptāhika Nīlāchala* in the year 1891 of the Śaka Era). It was properly edited by Prof. D. C. Sircar (*Journal of Ancient Indian History*, 1976-77, vol. X, pp. 114-115). See also below n. 24.

[2] The origin of the concept of the composite deity called Ḥarihara may most probably be traced to syncretistic tendencies in the religious movements in ancient India. The explanatory legends, giving reasons for the origin of such a deity (*Vāmana-purāṇa.* ch. 62 ; J. N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography* (2nd edition), p. 546 ; A. B. L. Awasthi, *Studies in Skanda Purāṇa, Part IV-Brahmanical Art and* Iconography, p. 225 ; etc.) may be taken as afterthoughts.

[3] *Vishṇudharmottara* (quoted by T. A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. II, pt. II, p. 171).

> *Kārya Hariharasyāpi dakshiṇārdha Sadāśivaḥ* (I)
> *Vāmamardha Hṛishīkeśasśvetanīlākṛitiḥ kramāt* (II)
> *Varatriśūlachakrābjadhāriṇo bāhavaḥ kramāt* (I)
> *Dakshiṇe vṛishabhaḥ pārśve vāmabhāge vihaṅgarāṭ* (II)

This description of Harihara, however, does not appear in the manuscripts of the *Vishṇudharmottara* consulted by Priyabala Shah (*Vishṇudharmottara-Purāṇa* ; *Third Khaṇḍa*, vol. I, pp. 158f ; see also S. Kramrisch, *The Vishṇudharmottara* (*Part III*), pp. 65f).

The above account of Harihara may be taken as the earliest known textual description of this composite deity, if the verses concerned are considered to have occurred in the original *Vishṇudharmottara,* datable to a period between sometime of the first or second half of the 5th century *A.D.* and sometime of the first half of the 7th century *A.D.* (Priyabala Shah, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. XXVI).

[4] *Śilparatna* (quoted in *EHI*, vol. II, pp. 169-170).

[5] *Tantrasāra*, ch. 2. In an edition of the *Tantrasāra* the name of the deity in question is written as *Harahari* as well as *Harihara* (*Vṛihat Tantrasāra.* compiled by K. Āgamavāgīśa and edited by V. Mukhopādhyāya and S. Mukhopādhyāya, 3rd. edition, p. 199, v. 51). In an edition of the *Aparājitapṛichchhā* of Bhuvanadeva (edited by P. A. Mankad) an iconic form is referred to in a sectional colophon as that of Harihara. But the detailed description in the relevant verses distinguishes it as a representation of Rudra -gaṇeśvara (ch. 212, vv. 38-39).

[6] *Suprabhedāgama*, ch. 34 (quoted in *EHI*, vol. II, pt. II, p. 169) ; *Pūrvakāraṇāgama*, ch. 11 (quoted in *EHI*, vol. II, p. 171).

[7] *Uttarakāmikāgama* (quoted in *EHI*, vol. II, pt. II, pp. 168-169).

[8] *Matsya-purāṇa*, ch. 260, vv. 21-27.

[9] *Agni-purāṇa*, ch. 49, vv. 24-25 ; *Vāmana-purāṇa*, ch. 62, vv. 29-31.

[10] *Aparājitapṛichchhā* (see above n. 5), ch. 213, vv. 28-29 ; *Hayaśirsha-Pāñcharātra, Ādikāṇḍa*, XXII, vv. 12-16a (see also H. D. Smith, *A Sourcebook of Vaishṇava Iconography, According to Pāñcharātra Texts*, p. 205).

[11] In this connection see also Hemādri, *Chaturvargachintāmaṇi*, II, *Vratakhaṇḍa.*

[12] *Agni-purāṇa*, ch. 49, v. 24. Chapter 49 of this *Purāṇa* is devoted to the description of icons of Vishṇu and his entourage (M. Th. de Mallmann, *Les Enseignements Iconographiques de L'Agni-Purāṇa*, p. 46).

[13] *Agni-purāṇa*, ch. 49, v. 25.

[14] See above nn. 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8. M. Th. de Mallmann, *op. cit.*, p. 46 ; D. B. Pāṇḍeya, *Devatārchchānukīrttana, Hindu Deva Pratimā Vijñāna* (in Hindi), p. 48.

[15] See above nn. 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10. The icon of Hariśaṁkara is described apparently as eight-armed in the *Aparājitapṛichchhā*. The *Vāmana-purāṇa* refers to Hari-

hara as fourteen-armed (?) (edited by P. Tarkaratna, ch. 62, vv. 29-31). Multiplication of limbs in iconic representations of deities probably alludes to *inter alia* attempts to lay emphasis on their supramundane character. In early Indian literature (including the *Ṛig Veda* and *Atharva Veda*) "cosmic parturition" is indicated as "the underlying religious significance of divine multiple bodily parts and forms" (D. Srinivasan, "The Religious Significance of Multiple Bodily Parts to Denote the Divine : Findings from the *Ṛig Veda*" *Asiatische Studien*, 1975, vol. XXIX, pp. 137-179; D. Srinivasan, "The Divine Significance of Multiple Body Parts in the *Atharva Veda*", *Numen*, vol. XXV, pp. 193-225).

[16] See above nn. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

[17] *EHI*, vol. II, pt. I, p. 53, J. N. Banerjea thinks that the ithyphallic figure of Oesho (Śiva), shown on a coin of Huvishka as holding a goat (or an antelope), a *vajra* (thunderbolt), a trident (all attributes of Śiva) and a disc (an attribute of Vishṇu), seems to show the beginning of the interesting composite icon of Hari-Hara (Harihara) of later days (*DHI*, pp 123-124). It should, however, be remembered that the deity is clearly described by the accompanying legend as only Oesho (Śiva). However, a Gandhāra sculpture and also a seal of a Hephthalite chief display composite deities incorporating *inter alia* characteristics of Śiva and Vishṇu (*ibid*, p. 124).

[18] *DHI*, p. 546.

[19] See above nn. 3, 4, 5 and 8.

[20] Priyabala Shah, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 223.

[21] *Ibid.*, *DHI*, pp. 122f. and 456f.

[22] *Vāmana-purāṇa* (edited by P. Tarkaratna), ch. 62, vv. 29-31.

[23] *DHI*, p. 546.

[24] The inscription was first noticed by P. C. Choudhury in one of the issues of the *Sāptāhika Nīlāchala* in the year 1891 of the Śaka Era. The inscription has been edited by us and submitted for publication in the *Epigraphia Indica.* For discussions on the palaeographic features of this and also of the inscription on the icon of Harihara, see above Chapter III, nn. 17 and 19.

[25] *EHI*, vol. II, pt. II, p. 170; Priyabala Shah, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 233; *DHI*, pp. 122f.

[26] *EHI*, vol. II, pt. II, p. 170; *DHI*, pp. 396f.

[27] See above nn. 3-10.

[28] A reference to Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa can be noticed in an invocation in a text called *Mantradevaprakāśinī* as quoted in the *Vṛihat Tantrasāra* (see n. 5), p. 199. But there is no description of the image called by the name *Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa.* A. B. L. Awasthi discusses a form called Maheśvara-Mahāvarāha on the basis of his interpretation of the evidence of the *Skanda-purāṇa* (V, III, 19, 60; 17, 12) (A. B. L. Awasthi, *op. cit.*, p. 226).

[29] Novel names are furnished occasionally also in epigraphs not inscribed on sculptures. For an example we can refer to the Deopara record of Vijayasena (*c. A.D.* 1095-1158). The inscription states that "we bow down to the temple called by the name Pradyumneśvara, that abode of the playful union of the beloved of Lakshmī and the husband of Mountain's daughter, where, because of the apprehension of the cessation of the embrace, the two goddesses have taken stand between their lovers and thus somehow interfered with the complete union of bodies (at least) in its representation in art" (*śilpa*) (N. G. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol. III, p. 46, v. 2 and p. 50). Umāpatidhara, the author of the epigraph, obviously referred to an image enshrined in the temple concerned. The icon apparently displayed the characteristics of the beloved of Lakshmī (i.e., Vishṇu) and of the husband of Mountain's daughter (i.e., Śiva) and was accompanied by the consorts of Vishṇu and Śiva. Lakshmī and Pārvatī, the consorts of Vishṇu and Śiva, do appear by the two sides of the composite deity in a panel of sculpture found at Badami (*DHI*, p. 546; pl. XLVI, no. 3). The

Agni-purāṇa clearly enjoins that Hariśaṁkara is to be accompanied by Gaurī and Lakshmī (*Agni-purāṇa*, ch. 49, v. 25; see also the *Hayaśīrsha-Pāñcharātra*, *Ādikāṇḍa*, XXII, vv. 12-16a).

The image alluded to by Umāpatidhara was apparently called Pradyumneśvara. The suffix-*īśvara* of the name *Pradyumneśvara* surely refers to Śiva (M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (1951), p. 171). *Pradyumna* was originally the name of a son of Kṛishṇa Vāsudeva (*ibid.*, p. 680). As one of the four *vyūhas*, he began to be considered as an emanation of Saṅkarshaṇa, who himself was an emanation of Vyūha Vāsudeva. So, in the ultimate analysis, Pradyumna was an emanation of Vāsudeva himself. Vāsudeva in his turn was identified with Vishṇu (K. A. Nilakanta Sastri (editor), *A Comprehensive History of India*, vol. II—*The Mauryas and the Sātavāhanas, 325 B.C.-A.D.* 300, pp. 385-393. See also the *Hayaśīrsha-Pāñcharātra, Ādikāṇḍa*. For a discussion on representation of Chaturvyūha in early Vaishṇava imagery, see D. Srinivasan, "Early Vaishṇava Imagery: Chaturvyūha and Variant Forms", *Archives of Asian Art*, 1979, vol. XXXII, pp. 39f). Later with the diffusion and elaboration of the *vyūha* system, Pradyumna came to be regarded as constituting one of the twenty-four forms of Vishṇu (*EHI*, vol. I, pt. I, pp. 230 and 232; *DHI*, p. 410; M. Th. Mallmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24). In any case, by the time of Umāpatidhara the term *Pradyumna* apparently began to be regularly reckoned as an alternative name of Vishṇu, since the description of Pradyumneśvara in the Deopara record clearly alludes to a composite deity involving Vishṇu and Śiva.

[30] An inscription on stone, found at Sirhalli (Gulbarga district) and dated in the fourth regnal year of the Later Chālukya king Taila (III) (*A.D.* 1151-1156), records the construction of three temples of Harihara (*Harihara-bhavana-trayam*). The epigraph also speaks of the installation (of a representation) of Kamalāvallabha (i.e., Vishṇu) and refers to (the icons) of Keśavaśvāmi (i.e., Vishṇu) and Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa (*Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for* 1958-59, App. B, no. 640). Apparently these three images were installed in the three temples dedicated to Harihara. Was each of these three deities considered by the author of the epigraph as a manifestation of Harihara? Or did he consider the name of each of these deities as an alternative to that of Harihara?

[31] The worship of the syncretistic deity involving Vishṇu and Śiva was popular even in parts of South-East Asia. Several Epigraphs from Kampuchea (Cambodia, ancient Kambuja), dated in or datable to the period ranging from about the latter half of the 6th to about the middle of the 10th century *A.D.*, refer to the composite deity under different names like *Śambhuvishṇu, Hariśaṁkara, Śaṅkarāchyuta, Vishṇvīśa, Īśānaśārṅgī, Harāchyuta. Harīśvara, Parameśvaraśārṅgī*, etc. (R. C. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Kambuja*, pp. 13, 24, 30, 41, 68, 150, 186, etc.). Some images of Harihara, assignable to the same period, have also been found in Kampuchea (*Artebus Asiae, Supplementum* XV, pll. II, XI (a); XXV, XXV (a), XXXIII (a), XXXV, XXXV (a), XL and XLII; *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extrême-Orient*, vol. XLVI, pll. XVI.-XVII; etc.). These epigraphic and iconographic data have been discussed by Prof. M. A. Dhaky in a paper ("Harihara in Cambodian Inscriptions and Hieratic Art") contributed to a volume to be published in honour of Sri M. N. Deshpande.

The syncretistic tendencies in religious movements in the Indian subcontinent not only ensured the icono-plastic union of Vishṇu and Śiva, but also connected them with other deities. For examples we can refer to *inter alia* iconic representations of Dattātreya (also called Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha) (*EHI*, vol. II, pt. I, pp. 253f; *DHI*, p. 124). Some of the Traipurusha or Tripurusha shrines, mentioned in a number of early mediaeval inscriptions, have been dedicated to Vishṇu, Śiva and Brahmā (A. Sundara, "Traipurusha Devālayas in Inscriptions and Related Temples in Dharwad-Bijapur Region: Their Implications", Paper read at a seminar on Bearing of Epigraphy on Indian Art held in Varanasi in December, 1979).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Saraswati, S. K., *Architecture of Bengal*, bk. I, Calcutta, 1976.
ASI, AR	*Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report*, Calcutta and Delhi.
BCLV	Bhandarkar, D. R. *et. al.* (editors), *B. C. Law Volume*, pt. II, Calcutta, 1946.
BL	*Bangladesh Lalitkalā, Journal of the Dacca Museum*, Dacca.
CII	Fleet, J. F., *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. III, *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and Their Successors*, Calcutta, 1888.
DHI	Banerjea, J. N., *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd edition, Calcutta, 1956.
EHI	Gopinath Rao, T. A., *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. I, pts. I and II, Madras, 1914 ; vol. II, pts. I and II, Madras, 1916.
EHK	Barua, K. L., *Early History of Kāmarūpa* (*From the Earliest Times to the End of the Sixteenth Century*), Shillong, 1933.
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*, Calcutta and Delhi.
EIB	Mitra, S. K. (editor), *East Indian Bronzes*, Calcutta, 1979.
EISMS	Banerji, R. D., *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series*, vol. XLVII, Delhi, 1933.
EP	Dikshit, K. N., *Excavations at Paharpur, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, no. 55, Delhi, 1938.
ESB	Saraswati, S. K., *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, 2nd edition, Calcutta, 1962.
HAB	Majumdar, R. C., *History of Ancient Bengal*, Calcutta, 1971.
HB	Majumdar, R. C. (editor), *The History of Bengal*, vol. I-*Hindu Period, Dacca*, 1943.
HCPA	Choudhury, P. C., *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam, to the Twelfth Century A.D.*, Gauhati, 1959.
IA	*Indian Antiquary*, Bombay.
JAIH	*Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Calcutta.
JARS	*Journal of the Assam Research Society*, Gauhati.
SIS	Saraswati, S. K., *A Survey of Indian Sculpture*, 2nd edition, Delhi, 1975.

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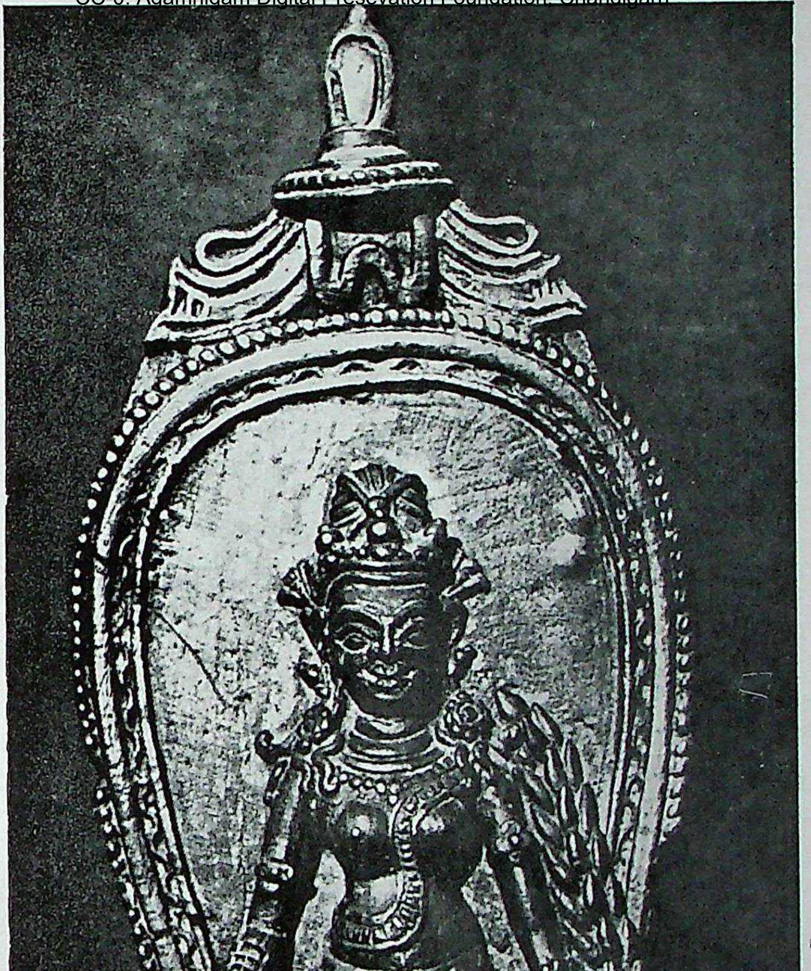

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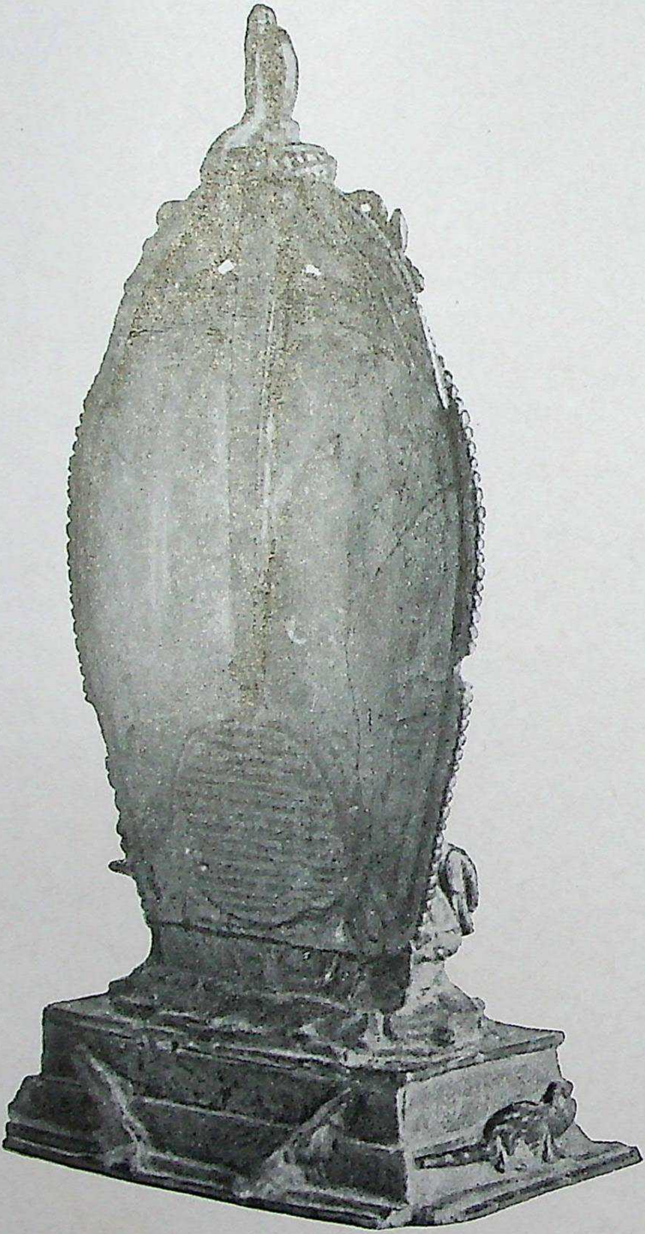

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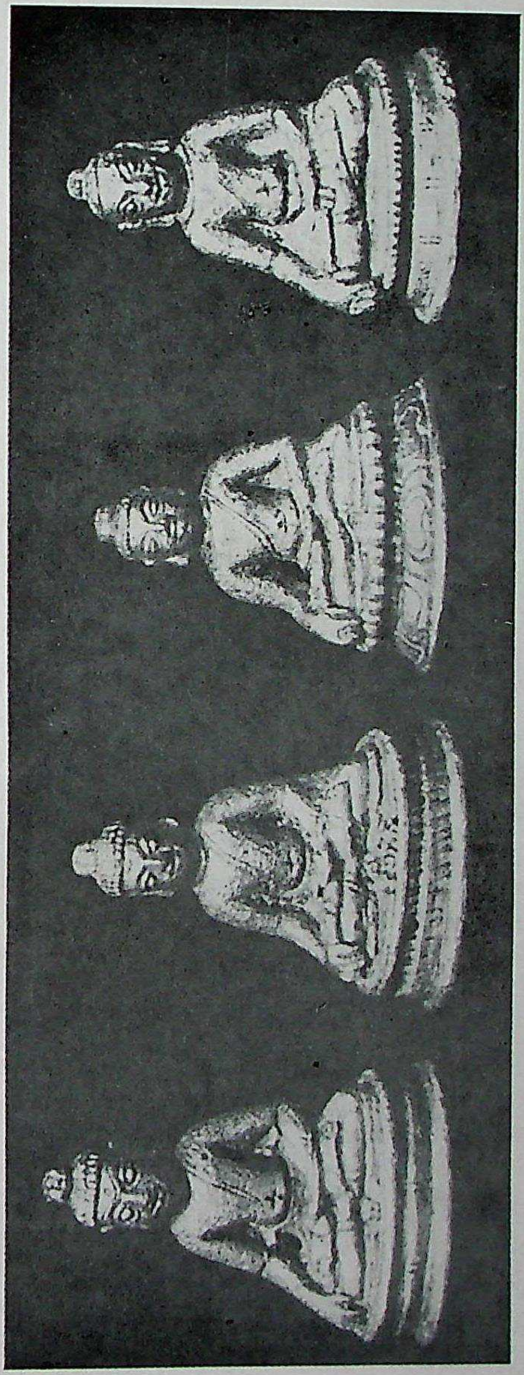

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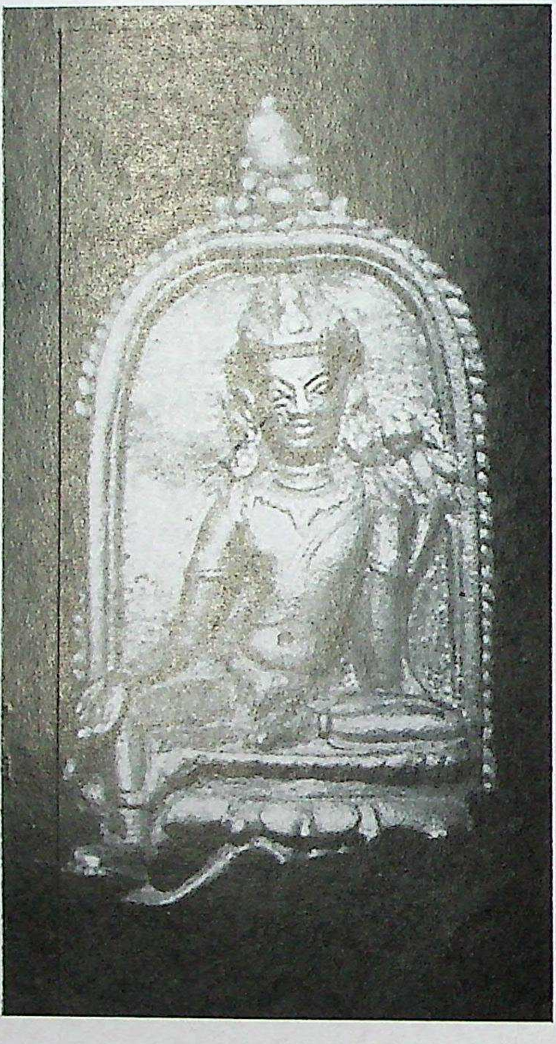

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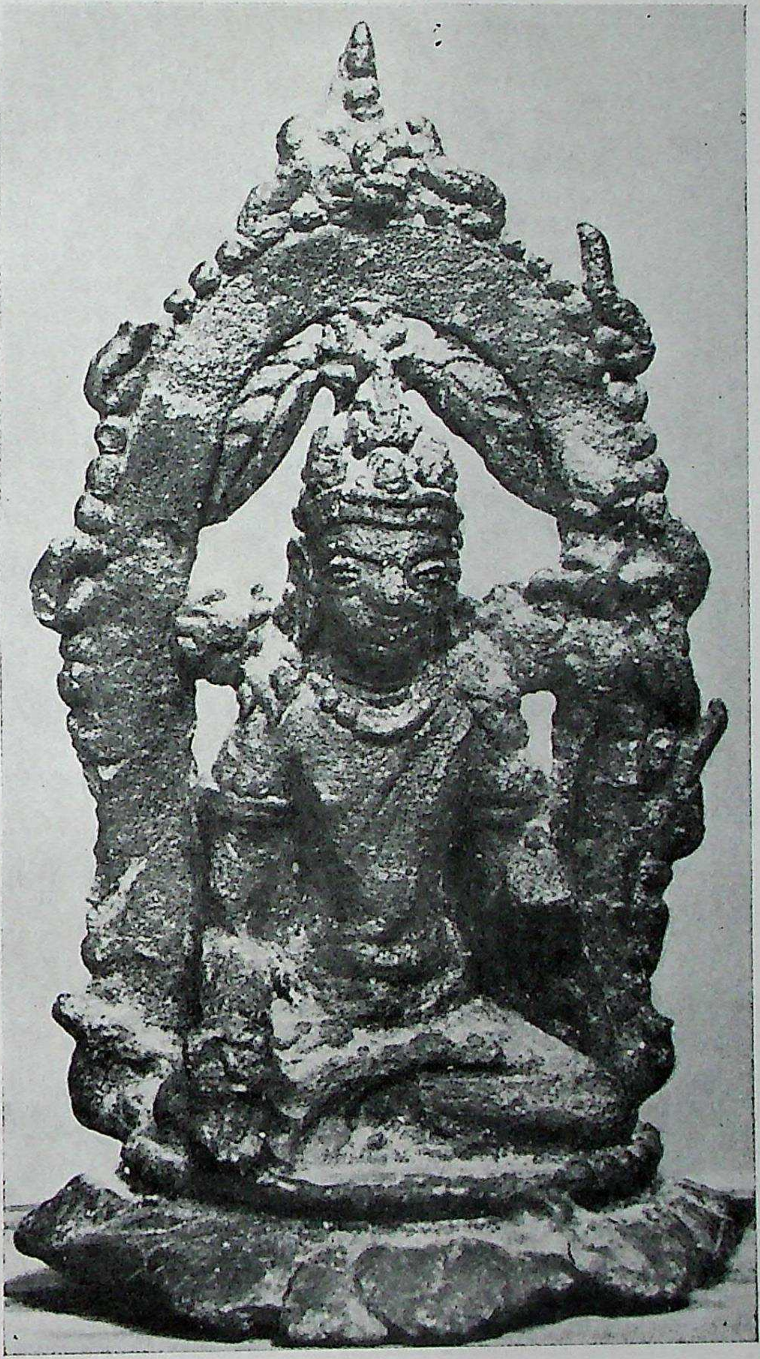

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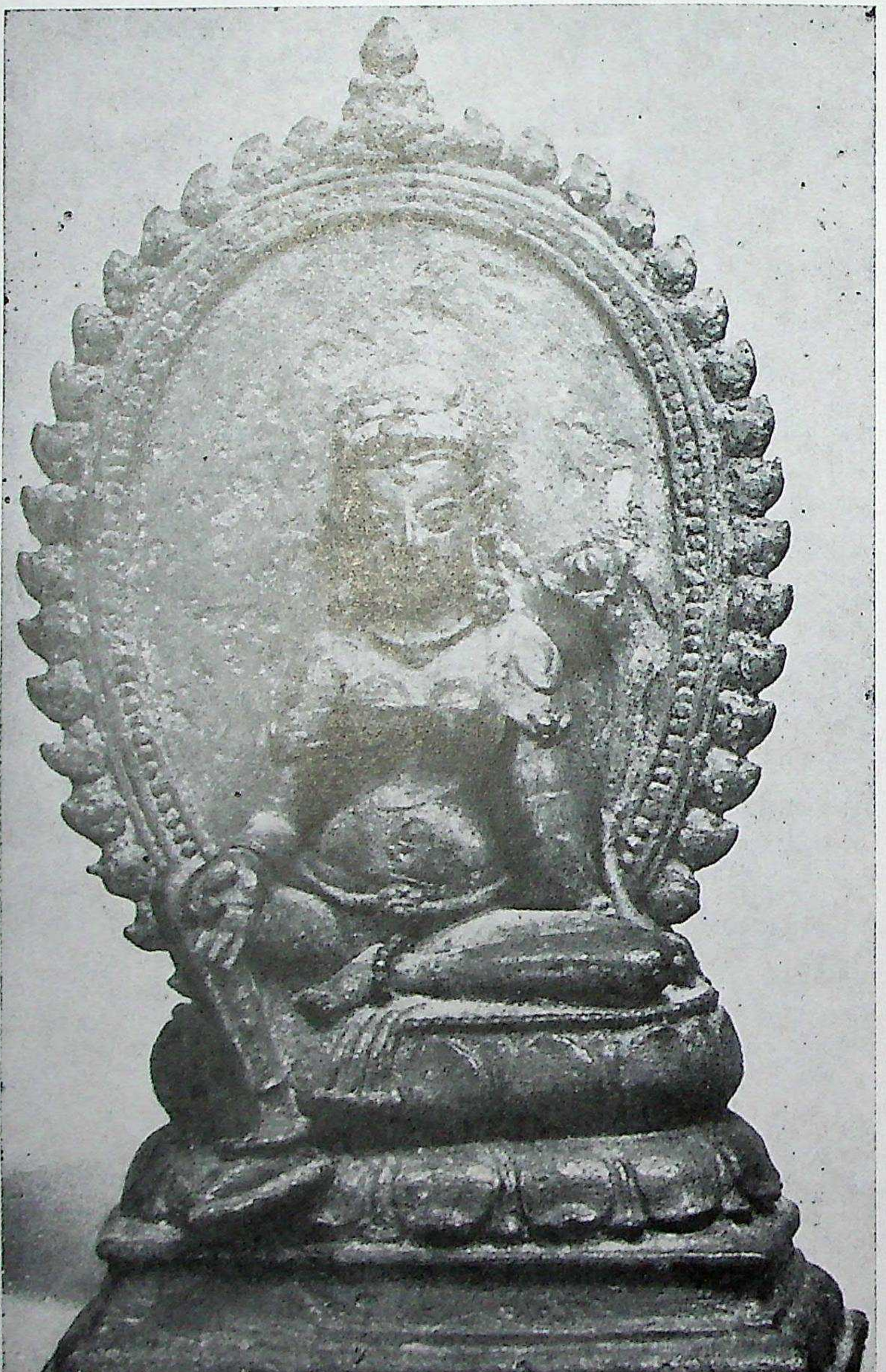

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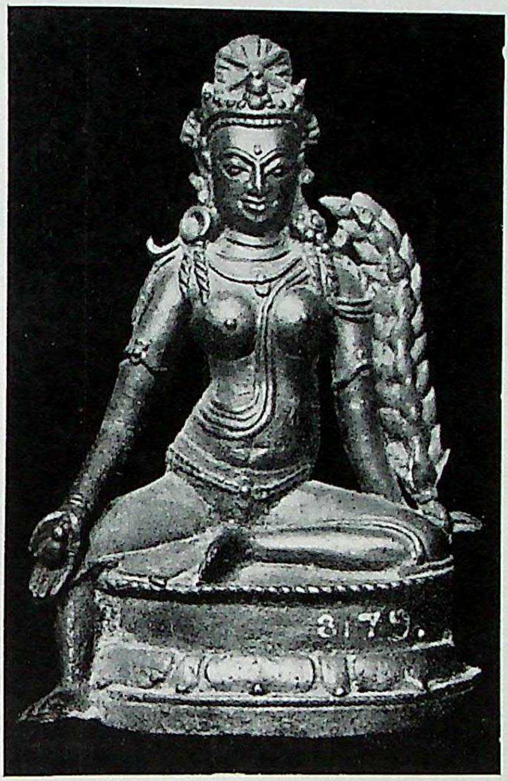

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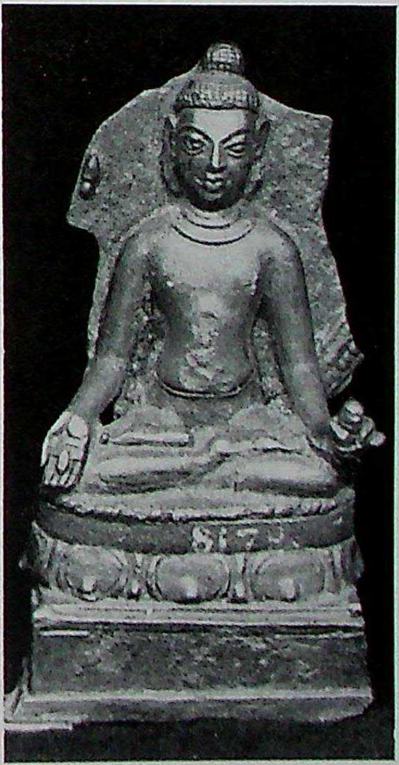

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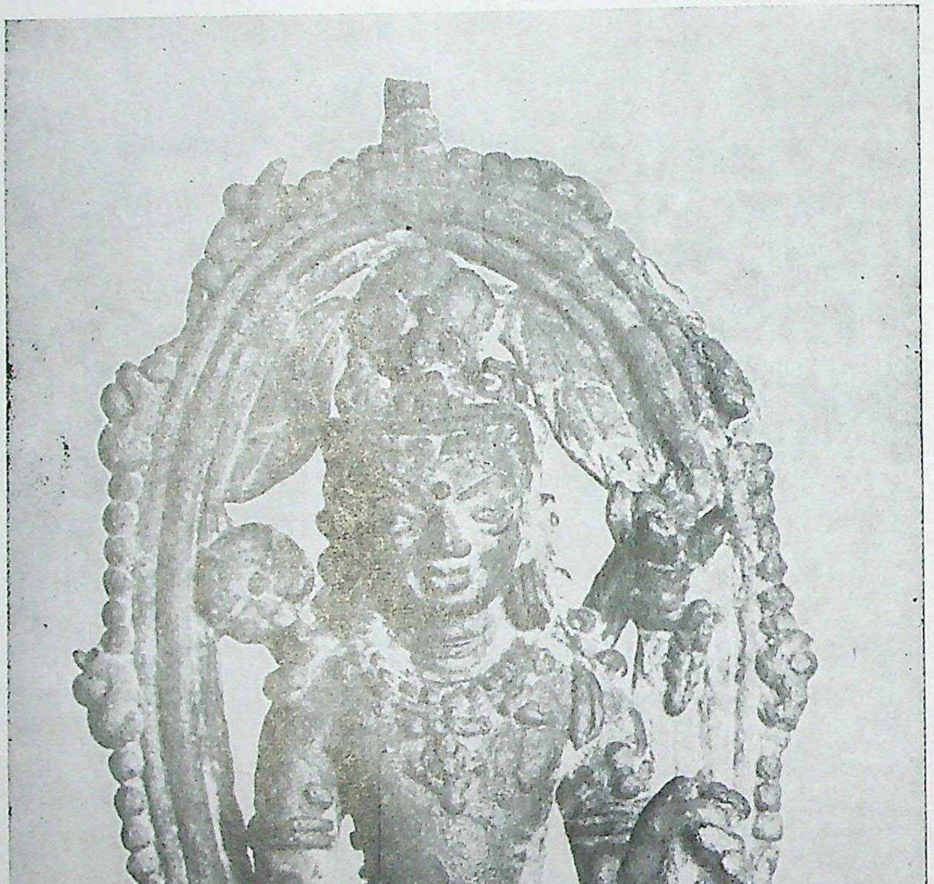

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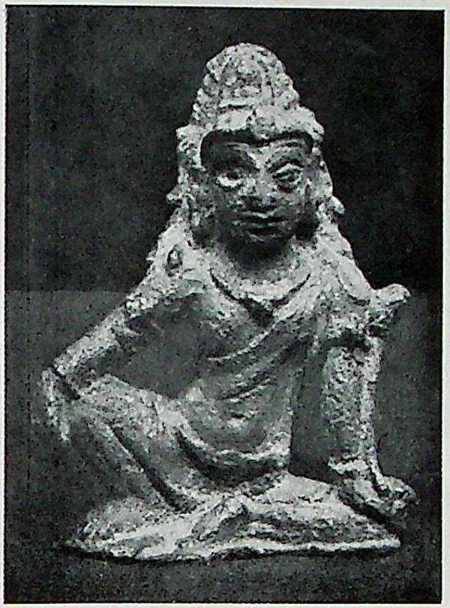

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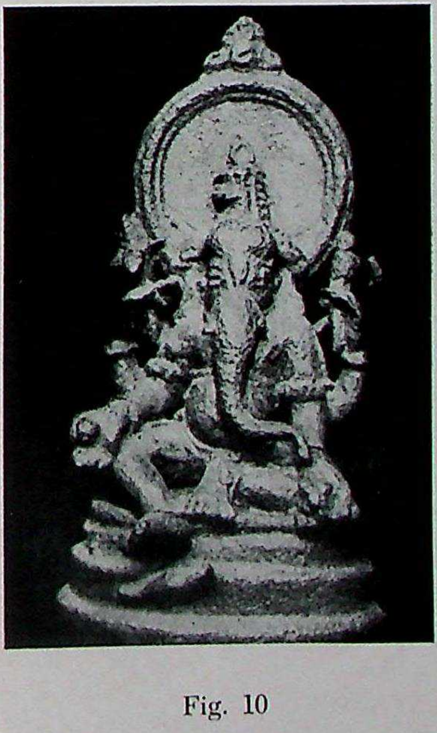

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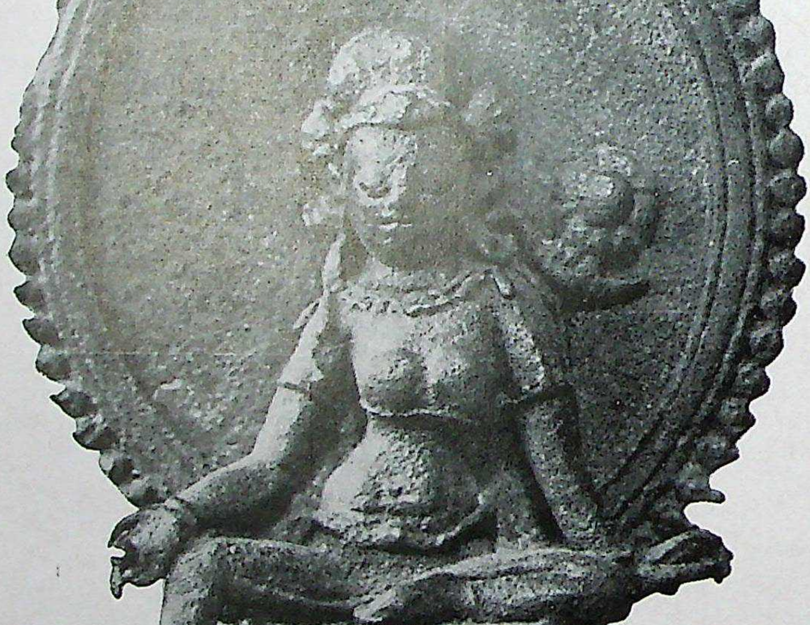

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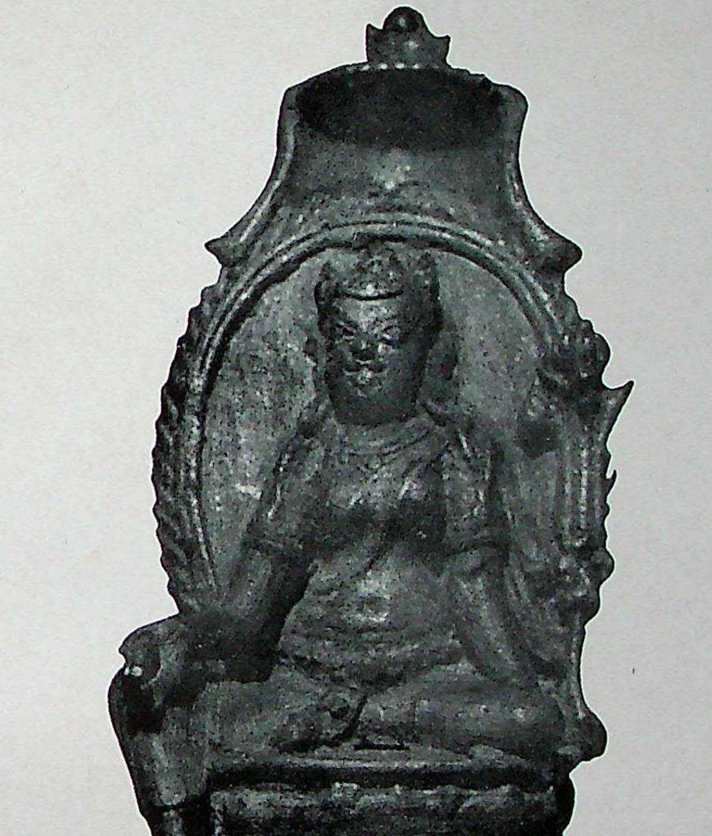

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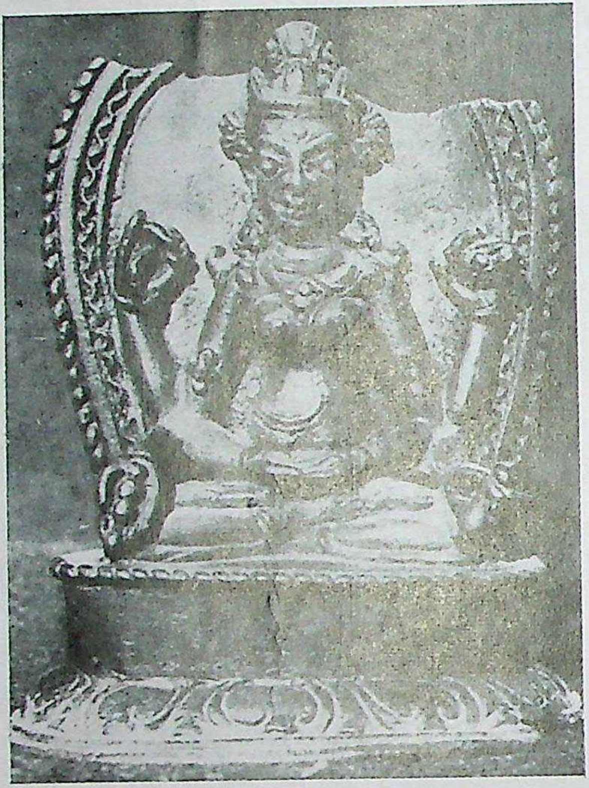

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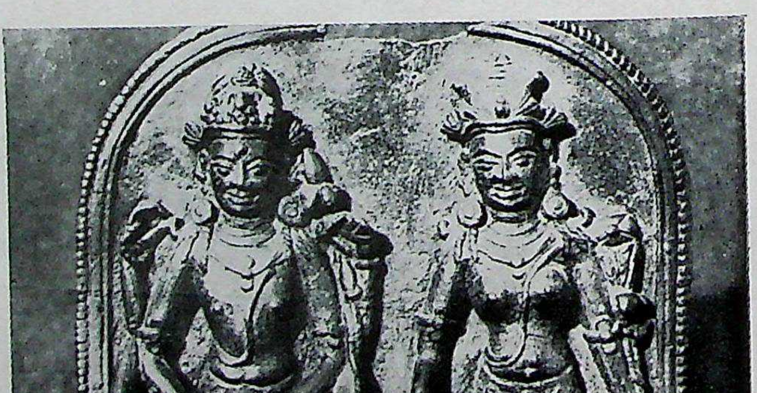

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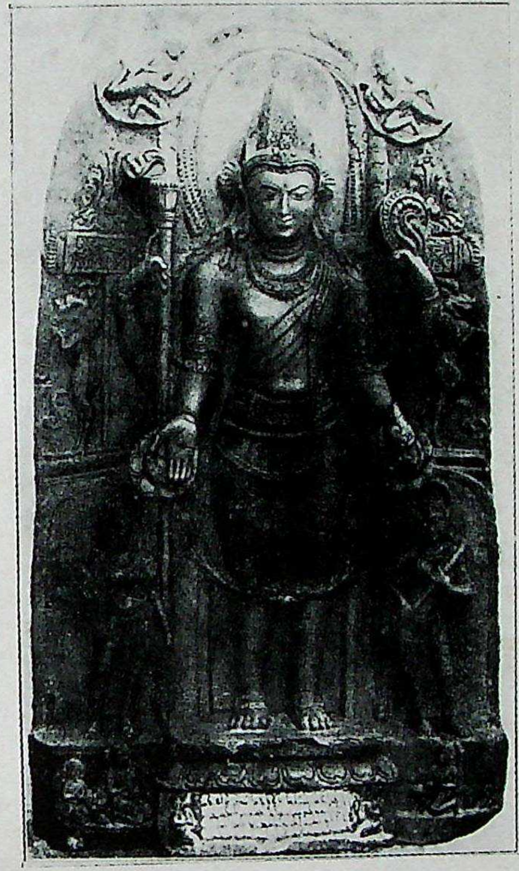

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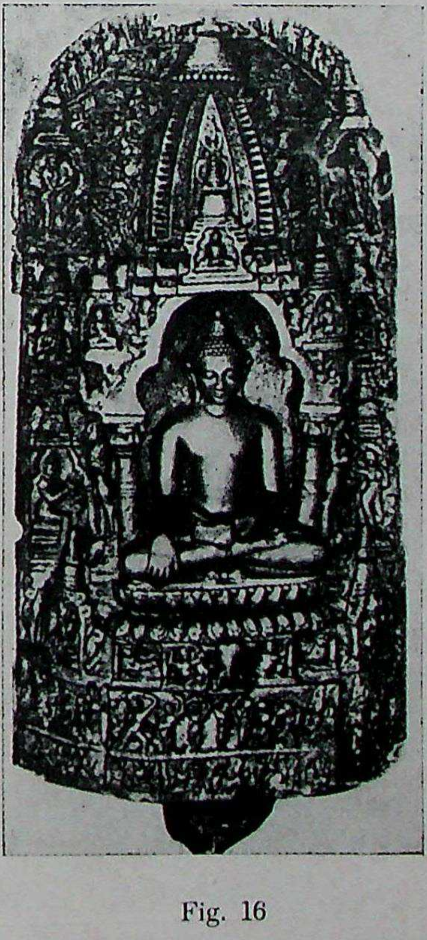
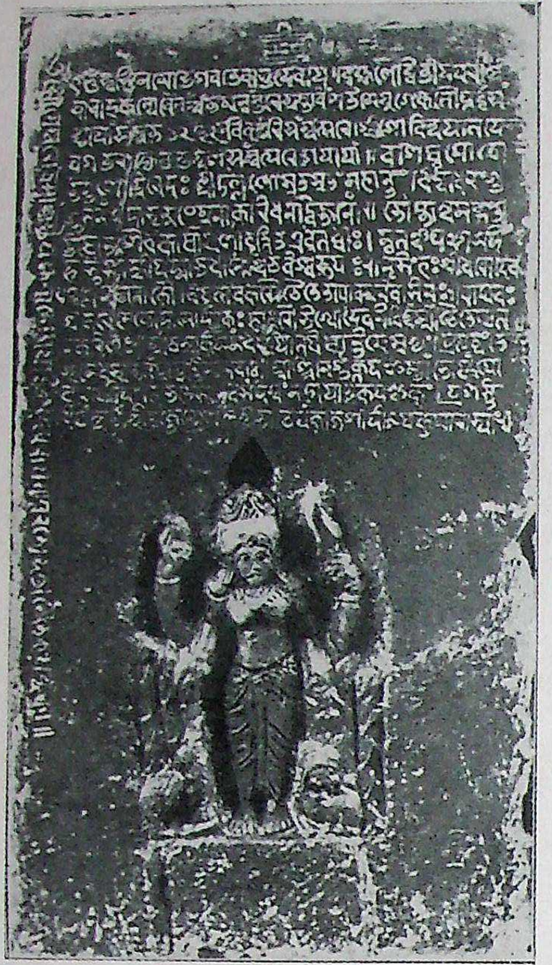


Fig. 16



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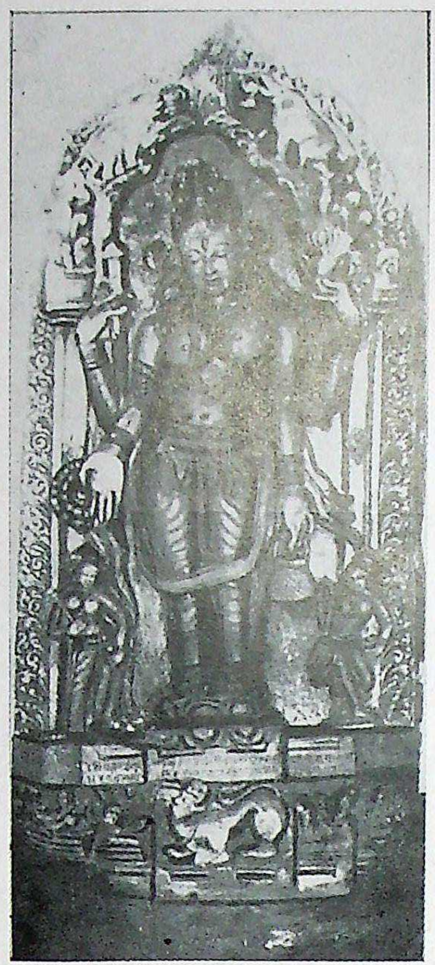

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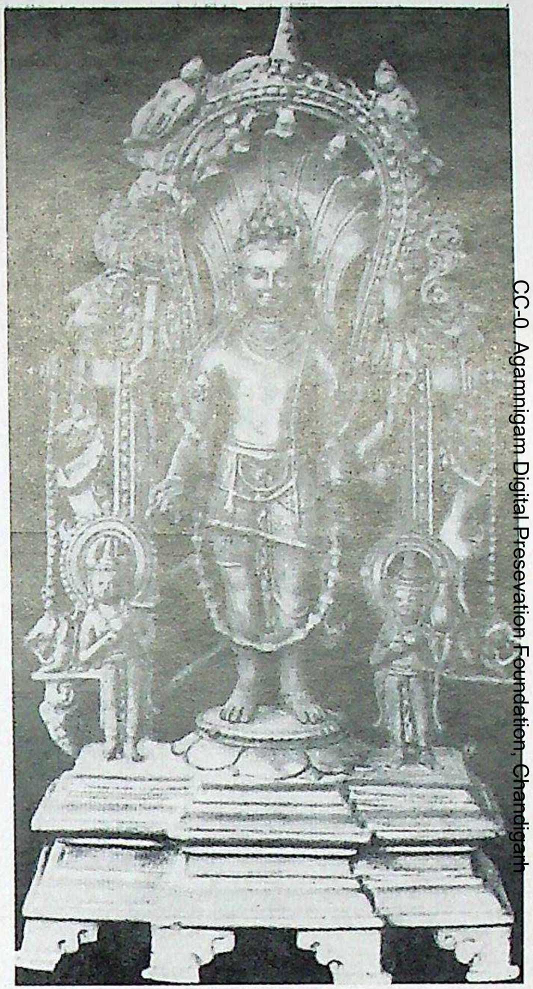

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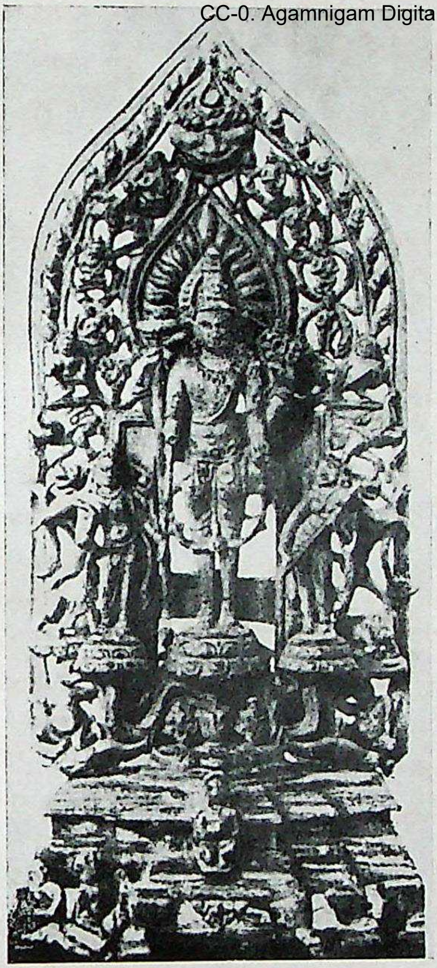

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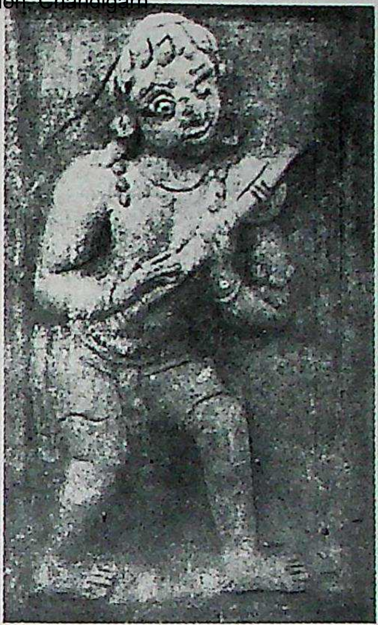

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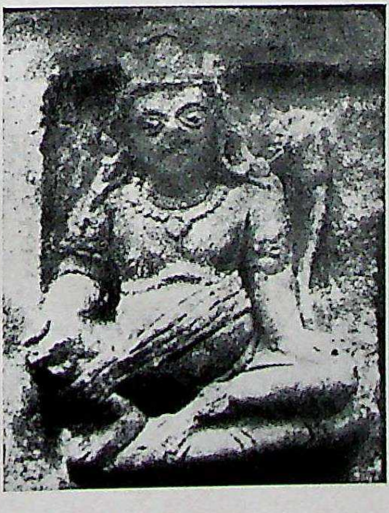

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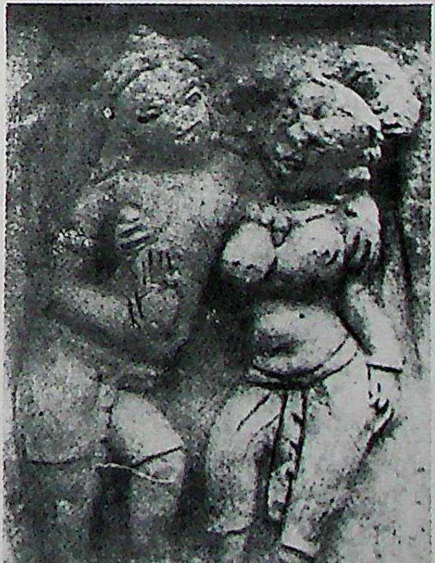
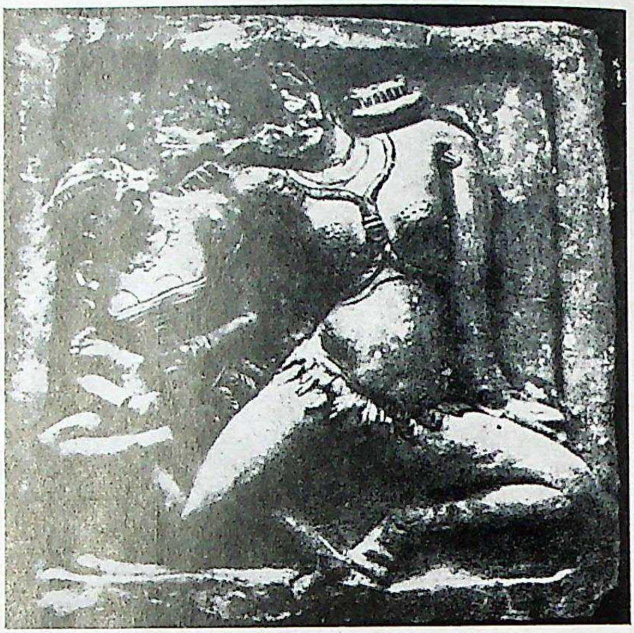


Fig. 23

Fig. 24



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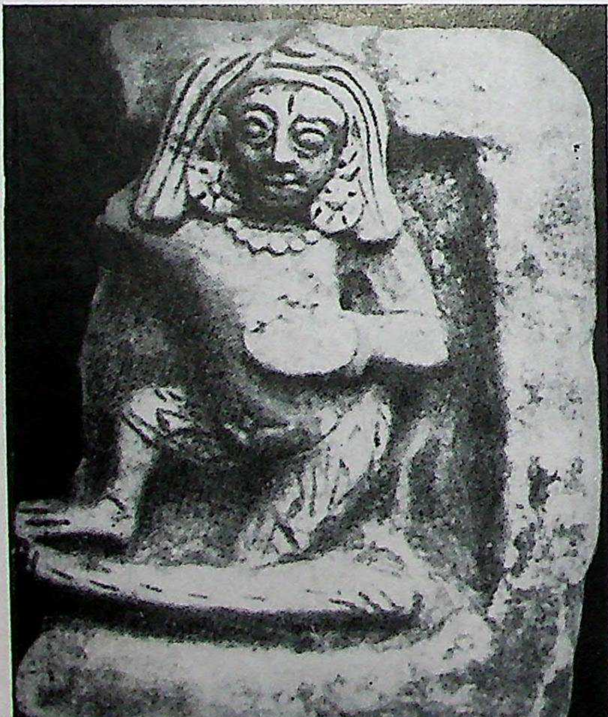

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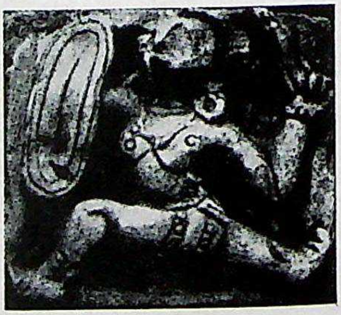

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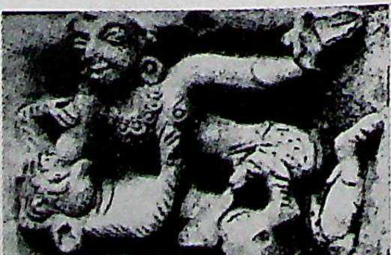

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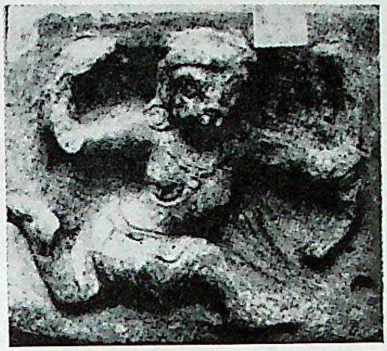

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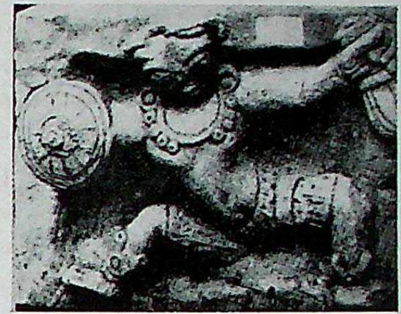

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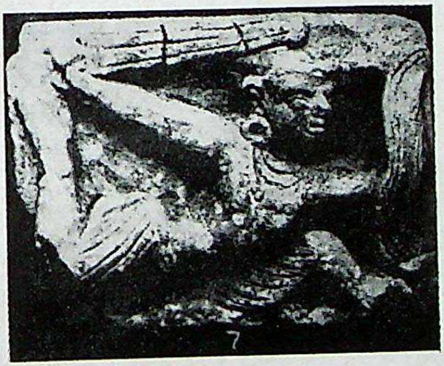

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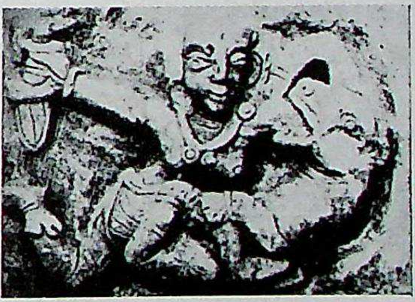

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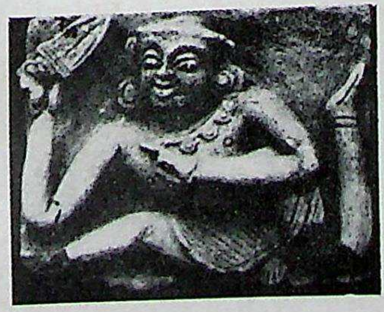

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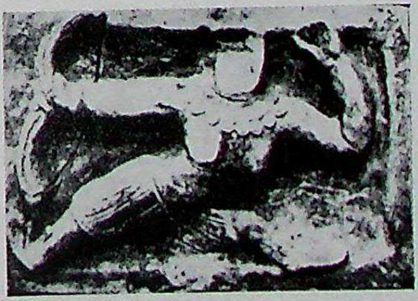

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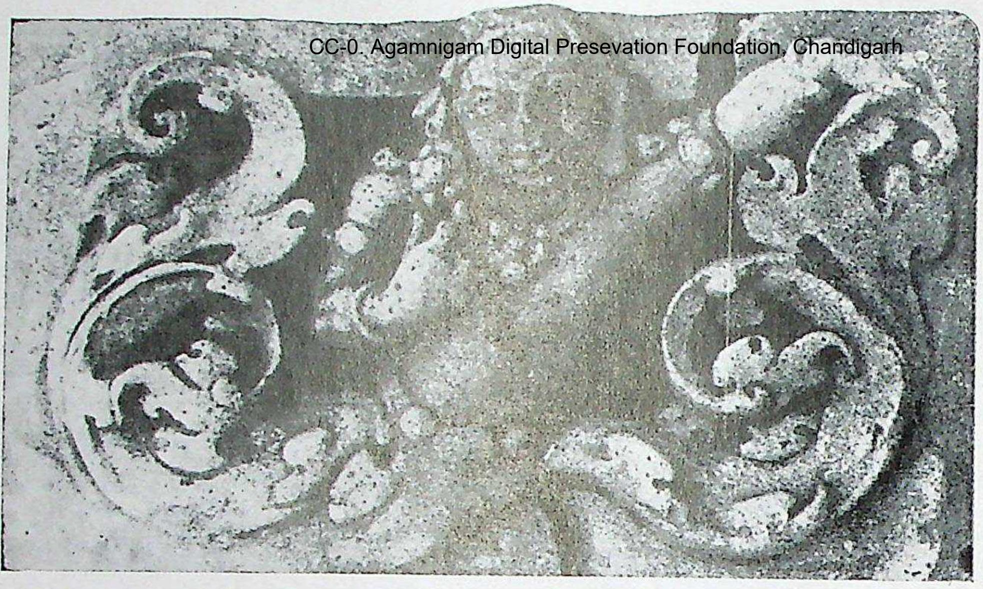

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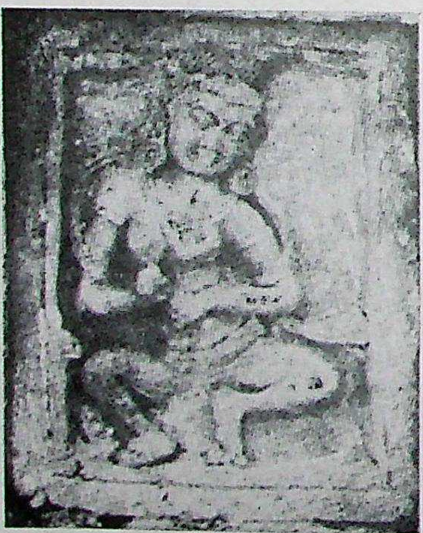

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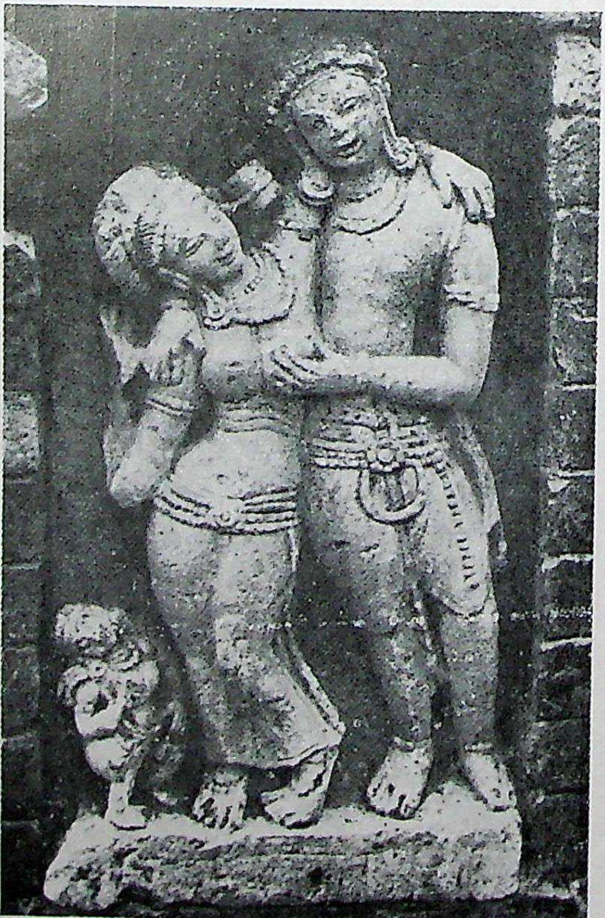

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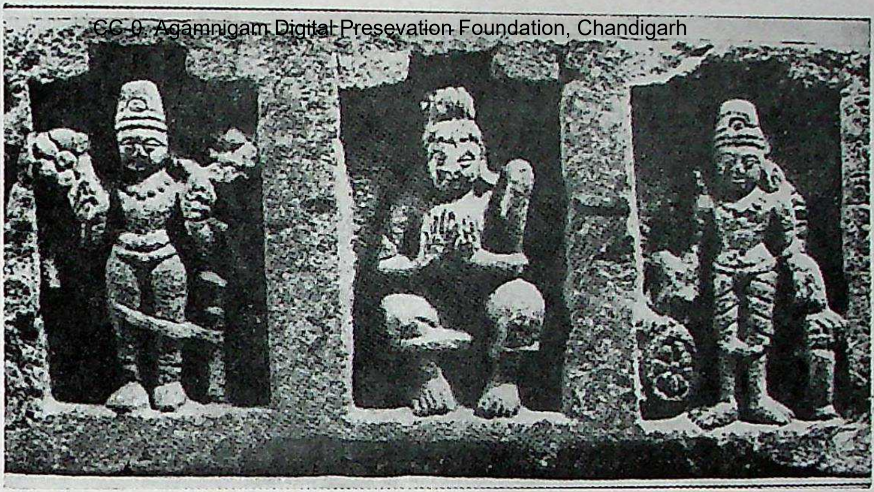

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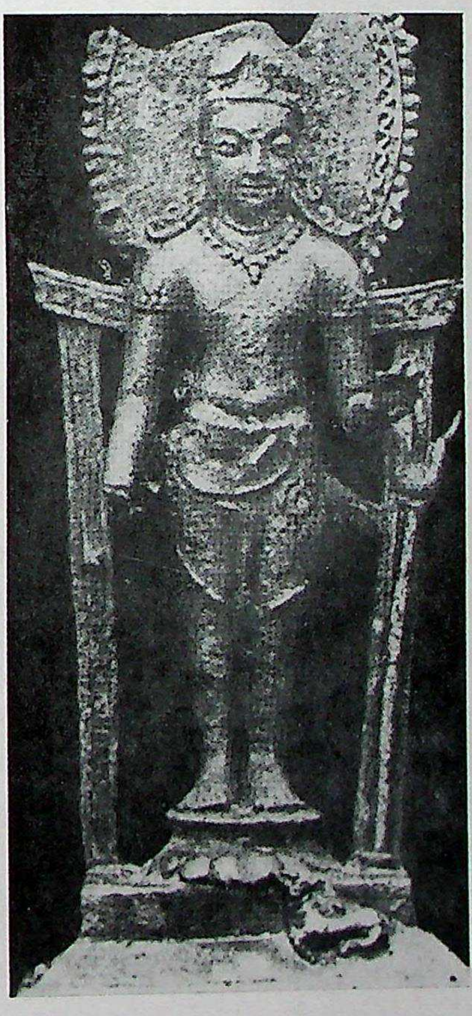

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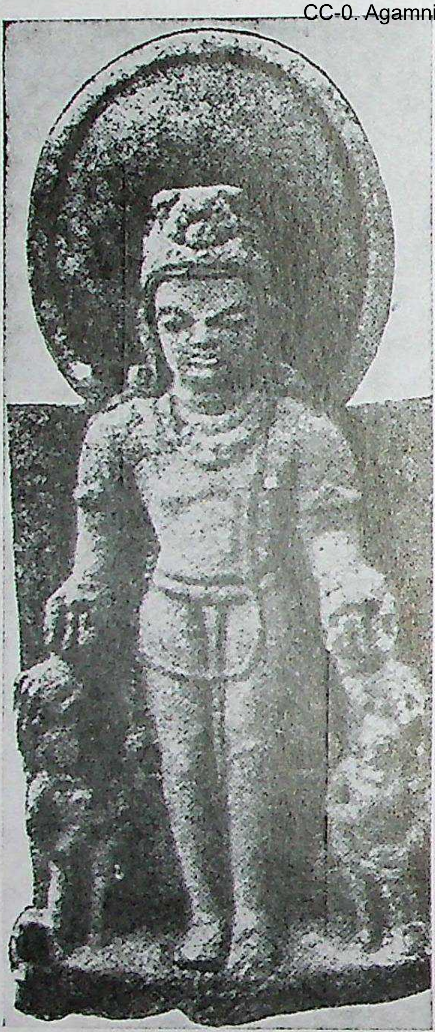

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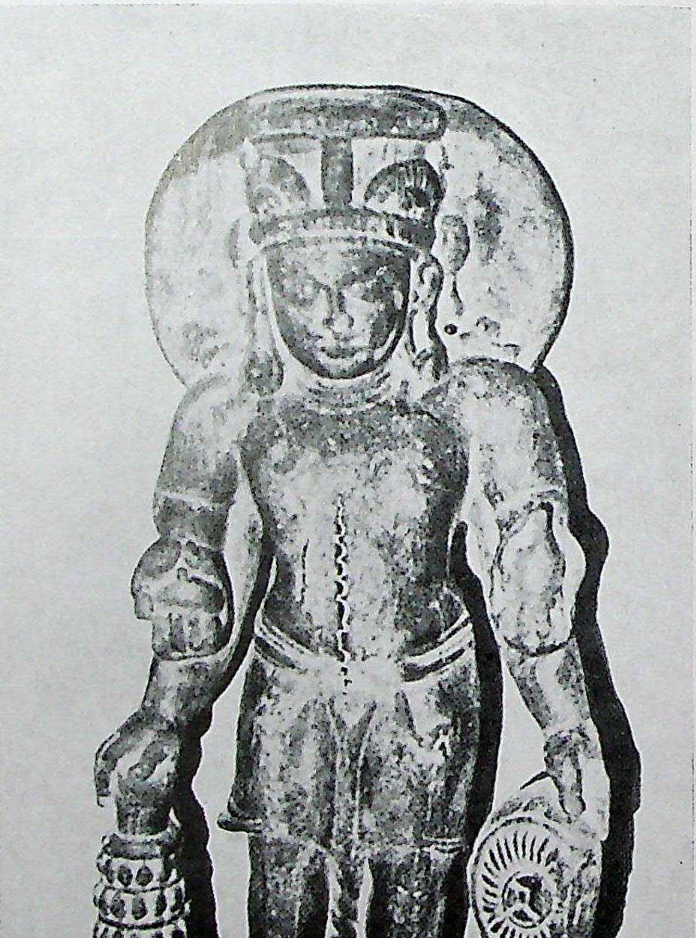

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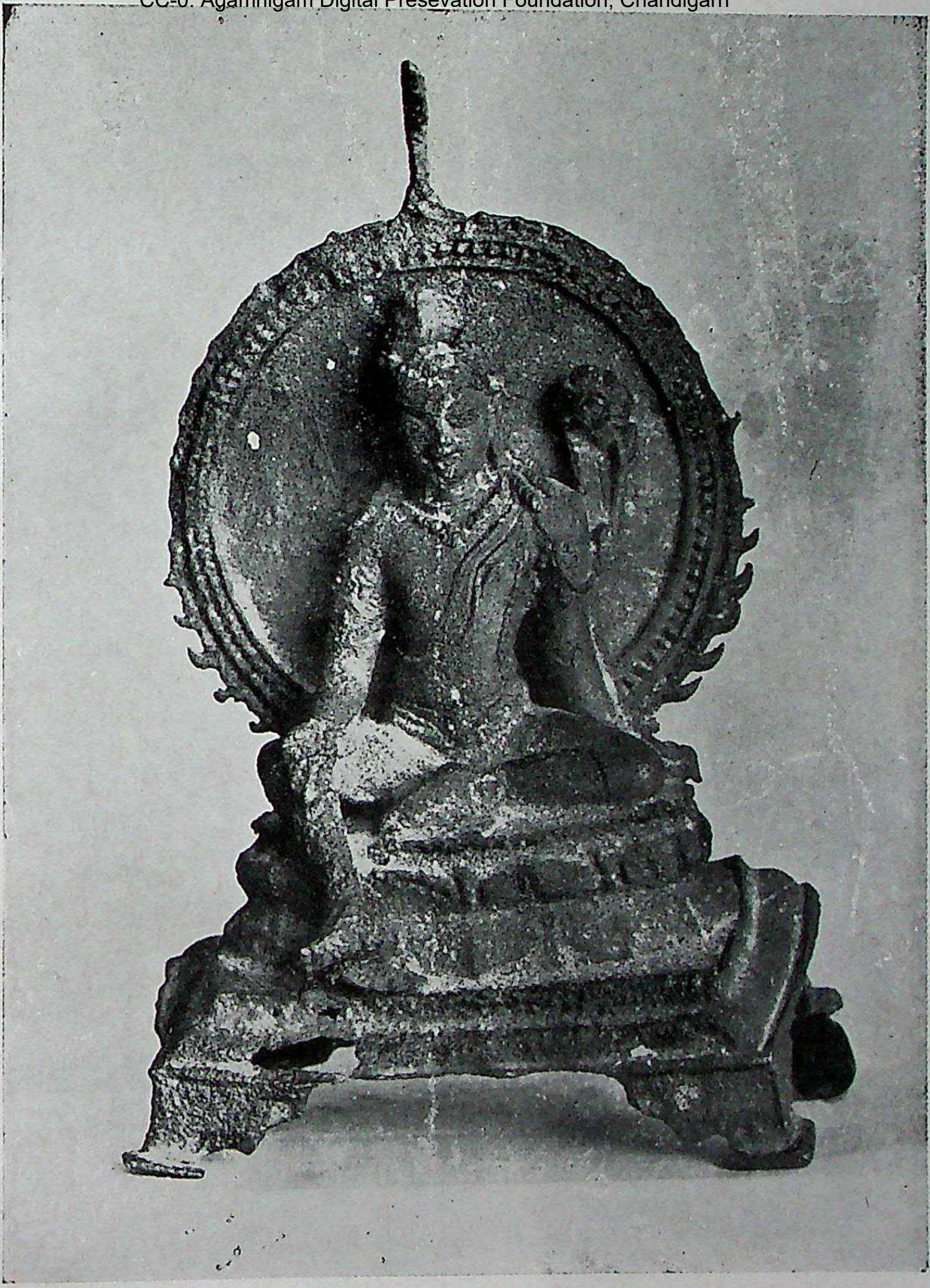

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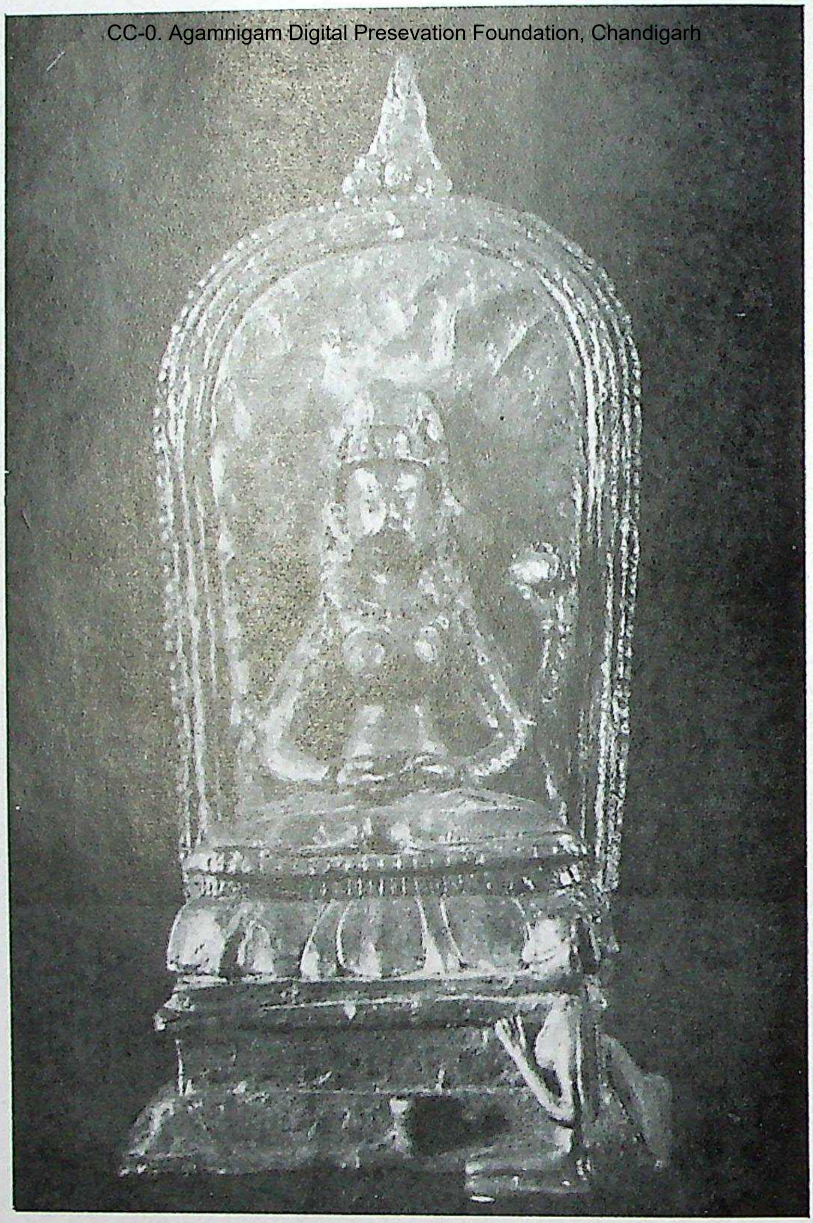

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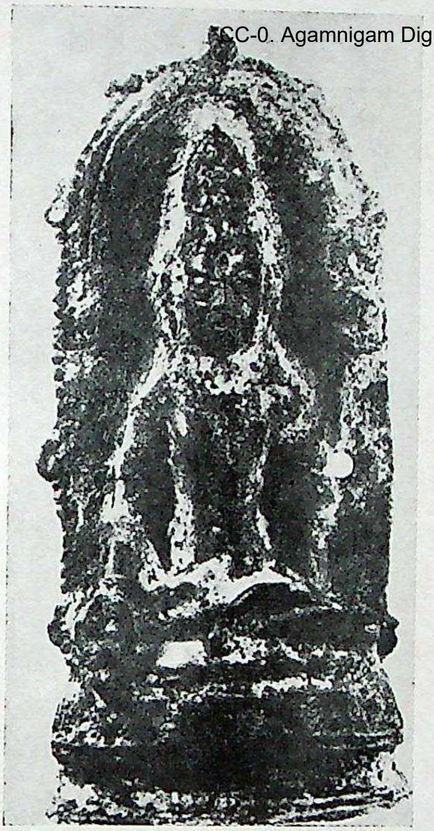

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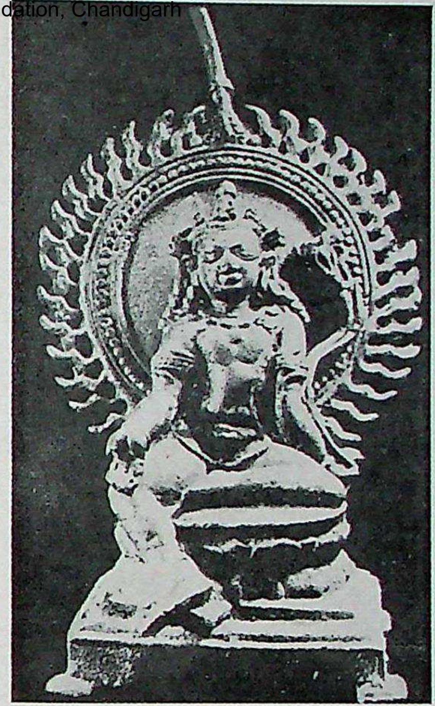

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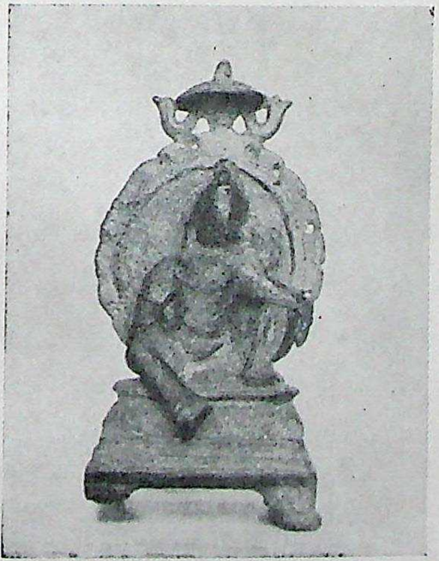

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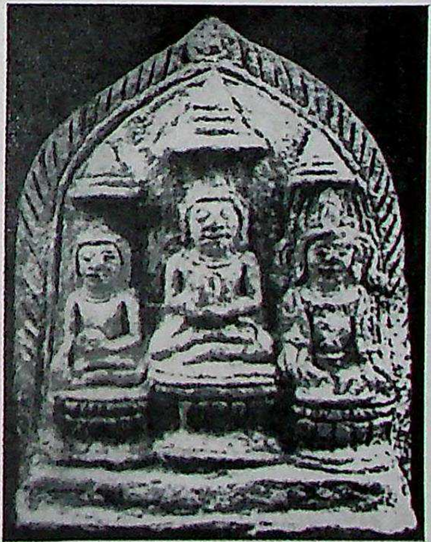

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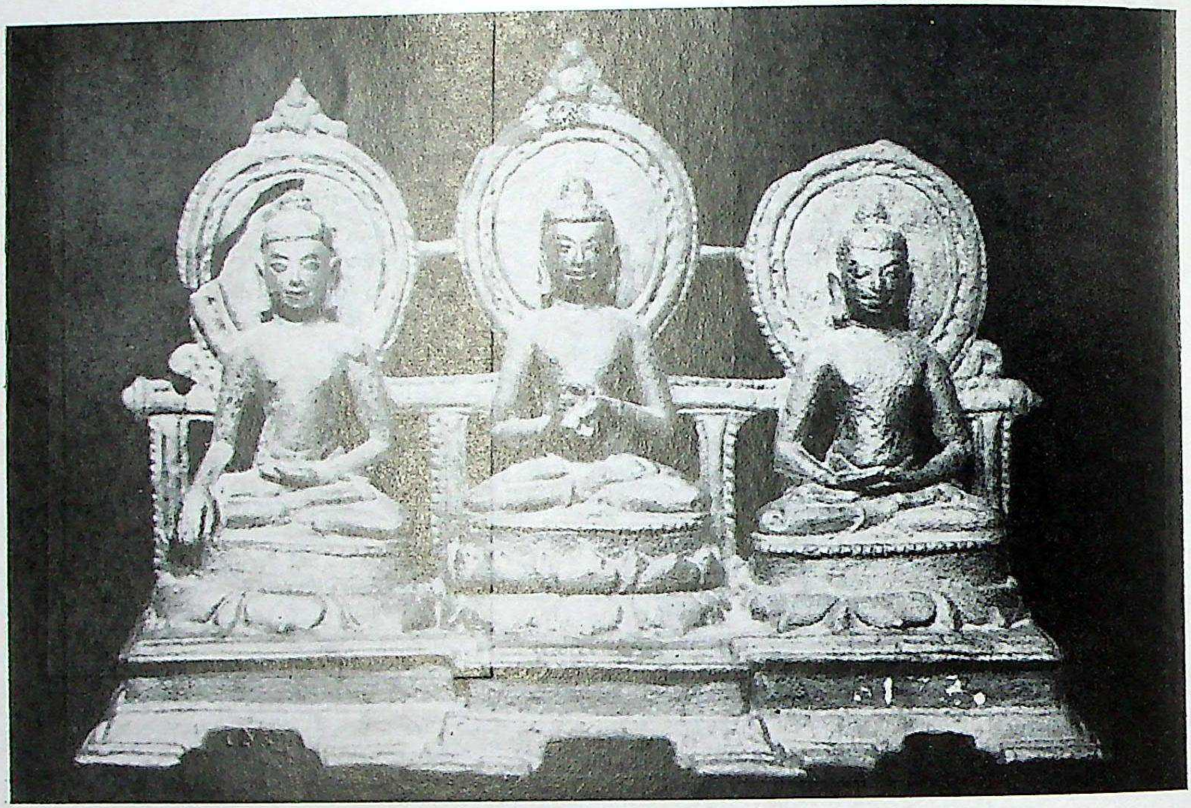

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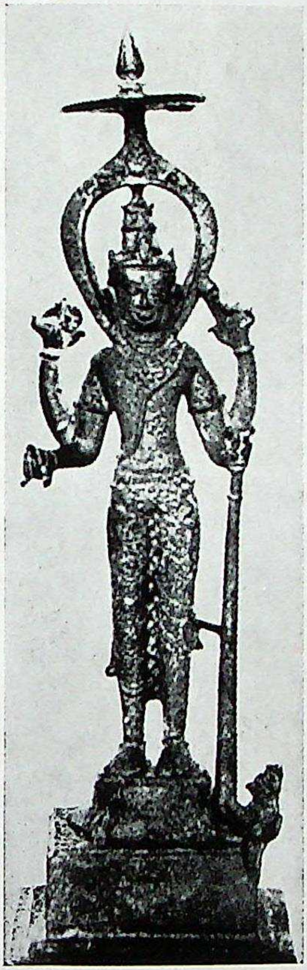

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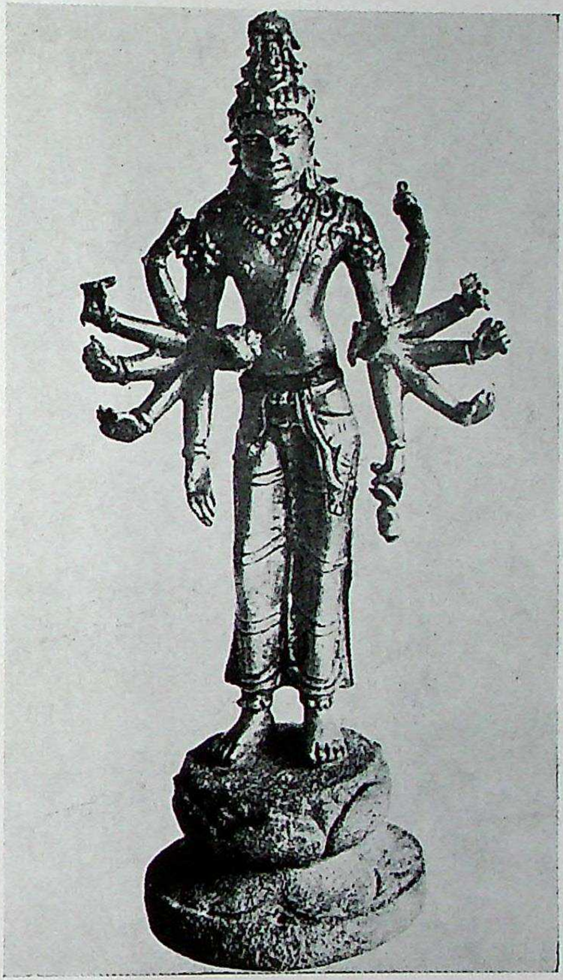

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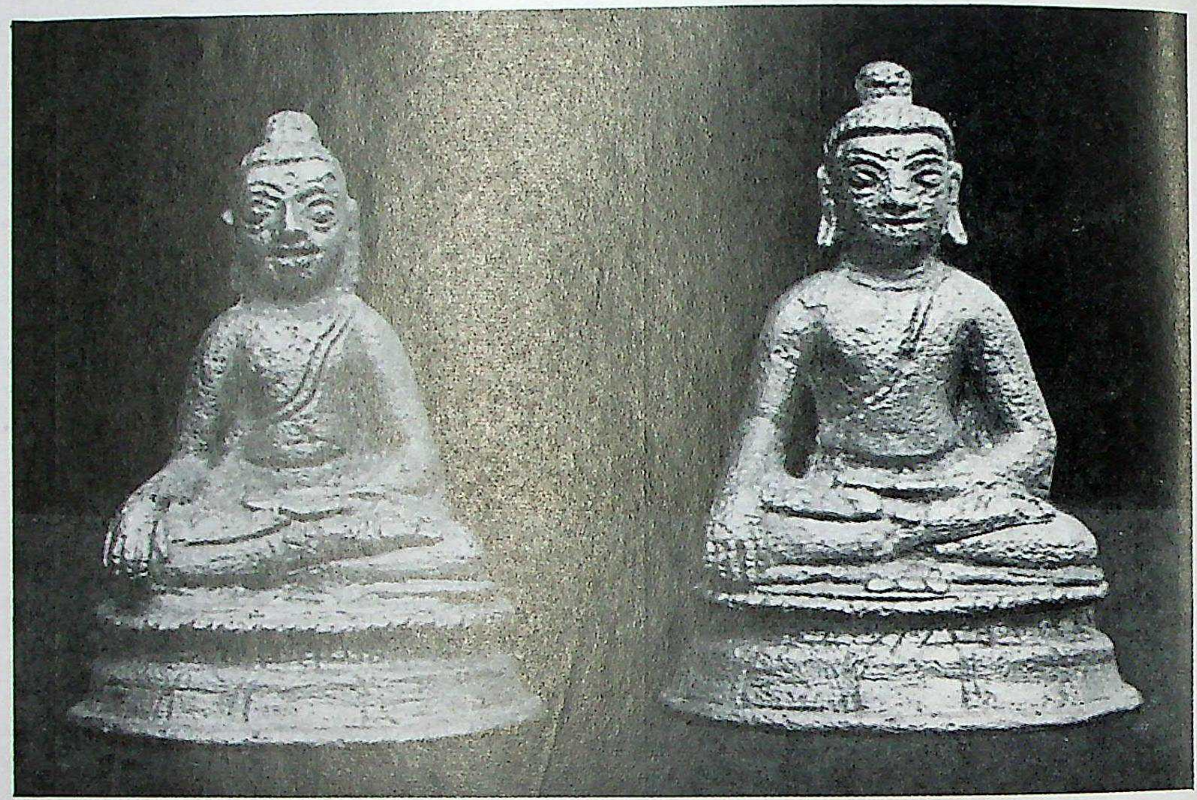

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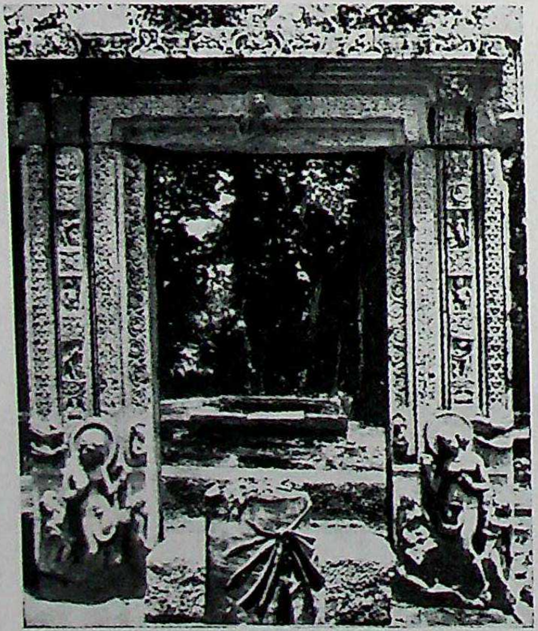

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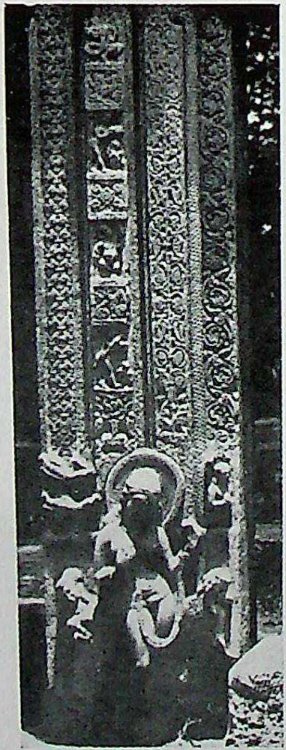

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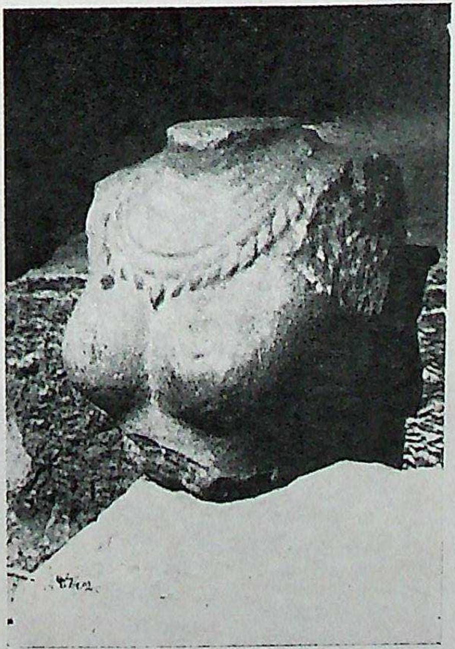

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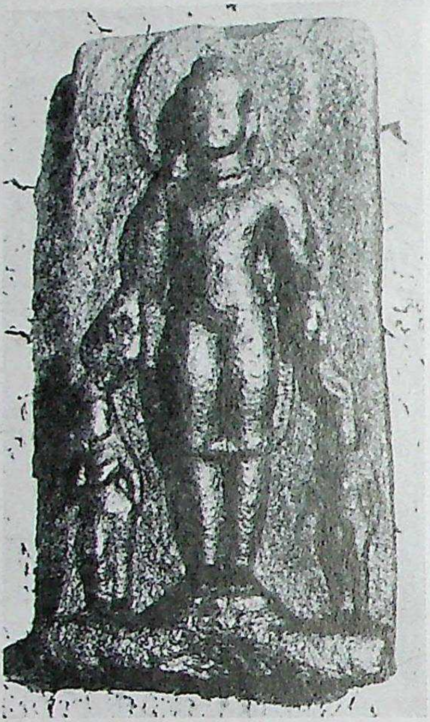

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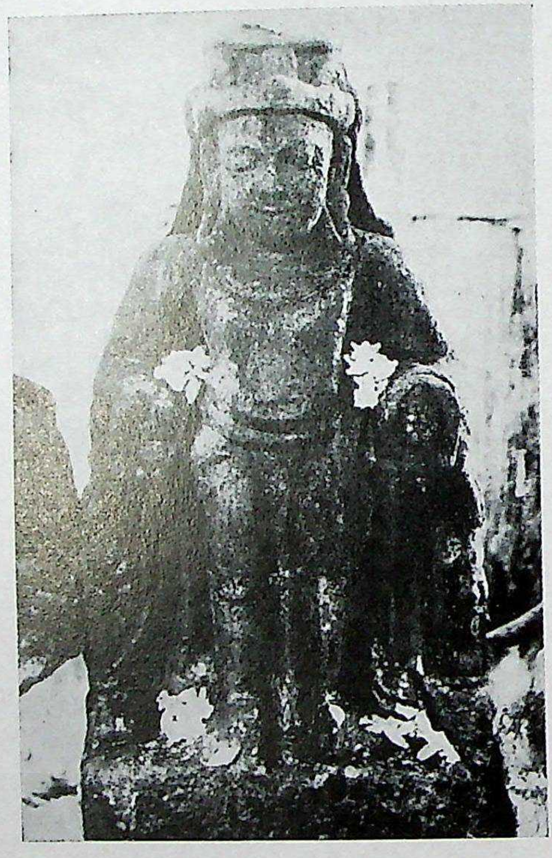

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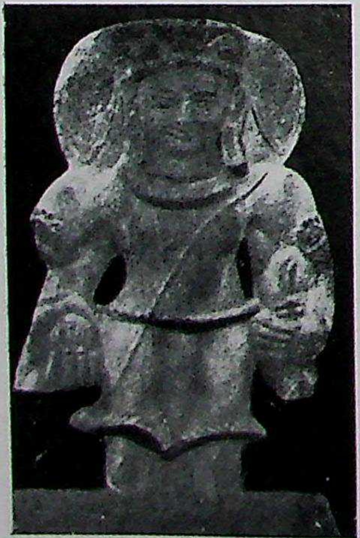

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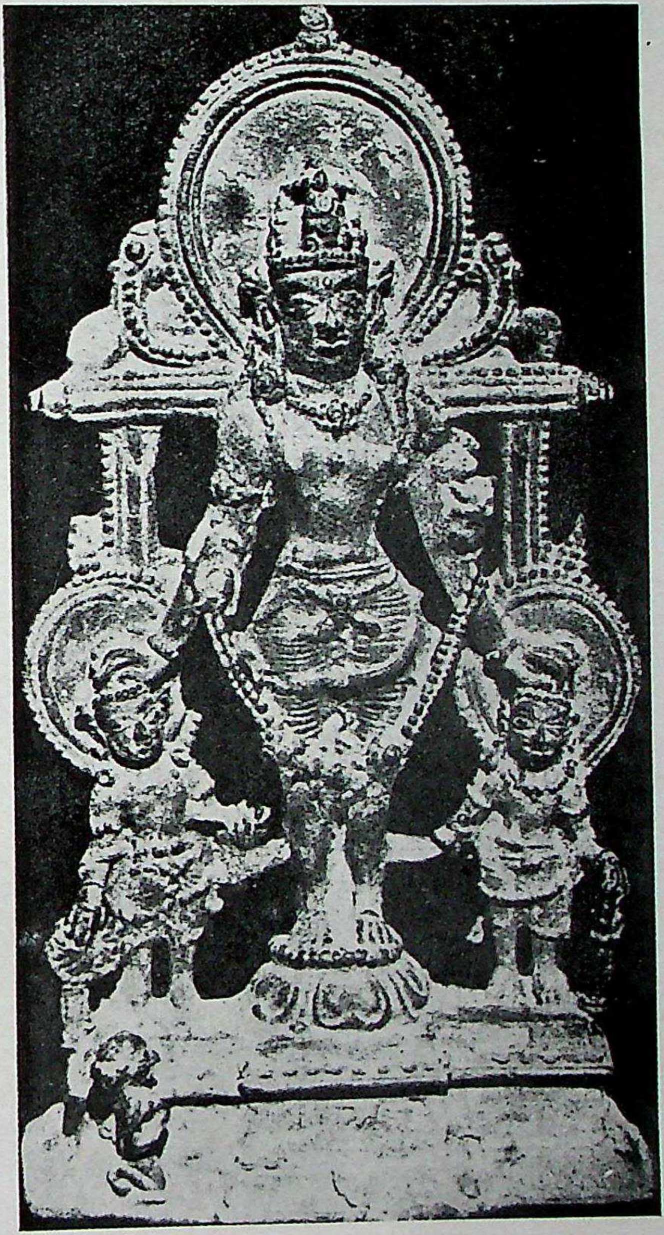

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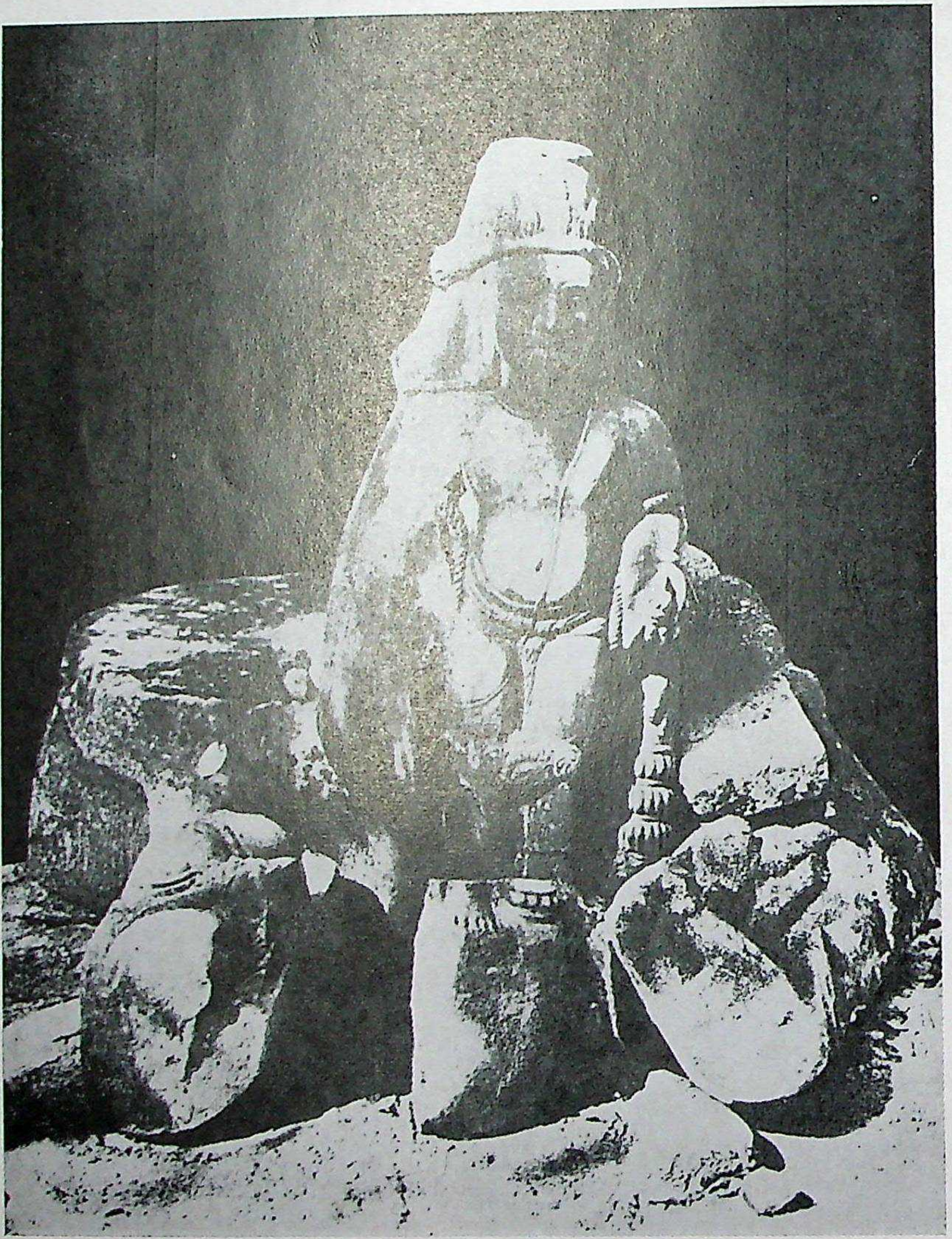

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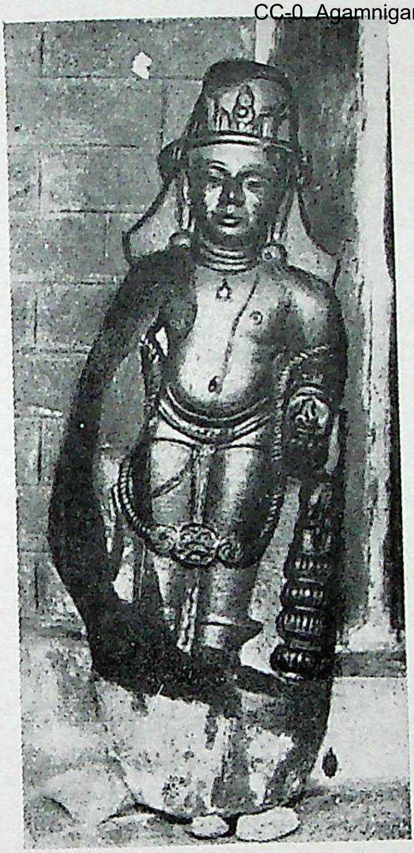

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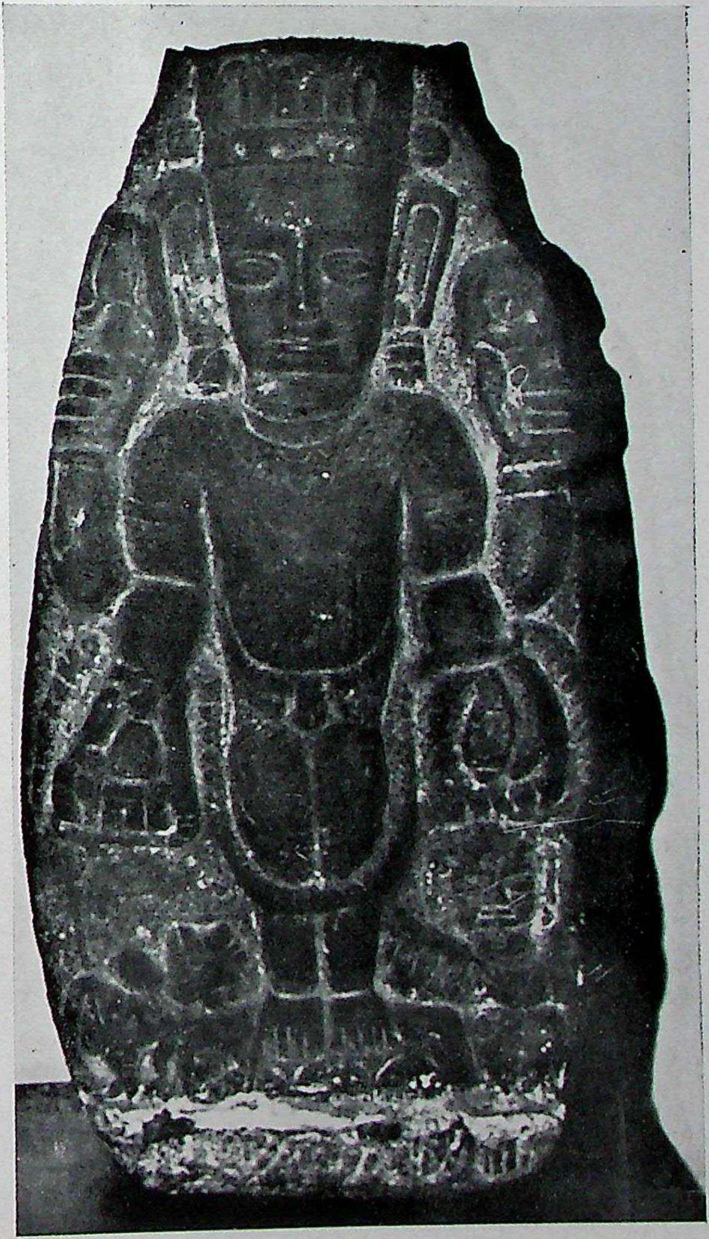

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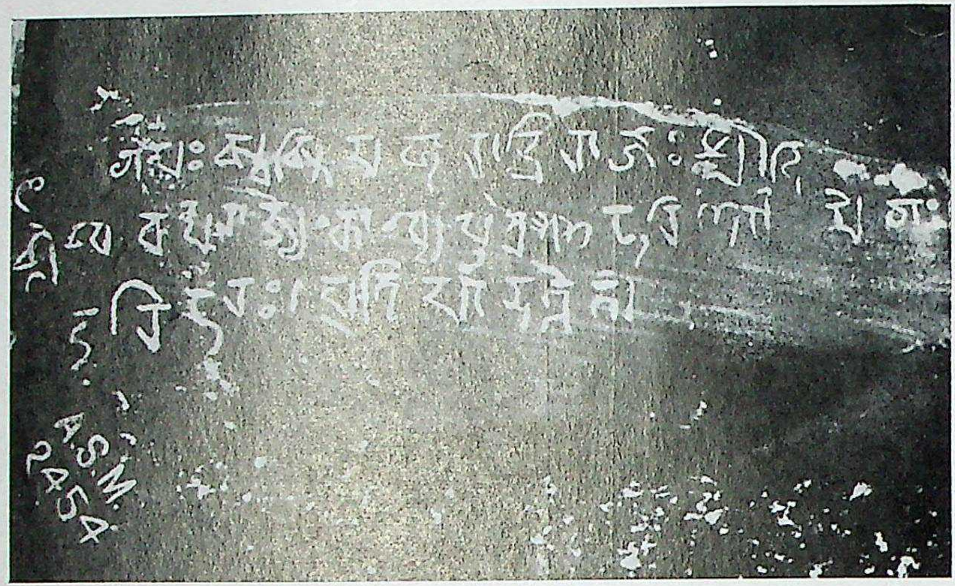

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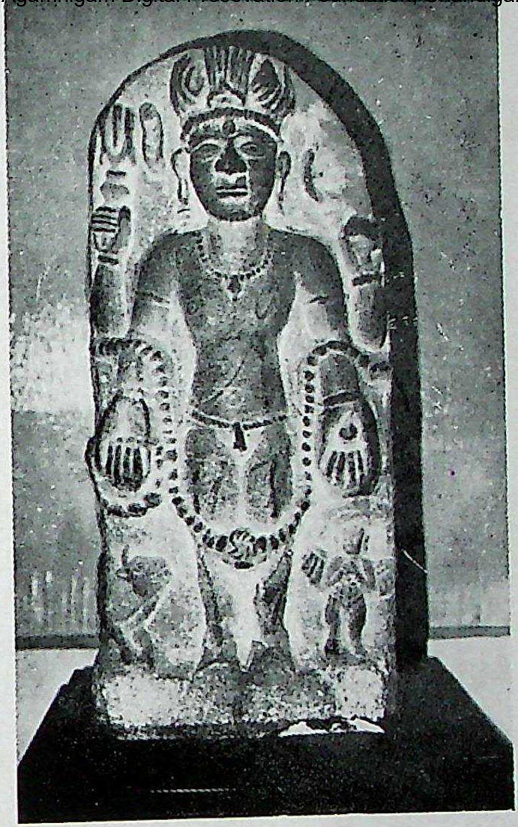

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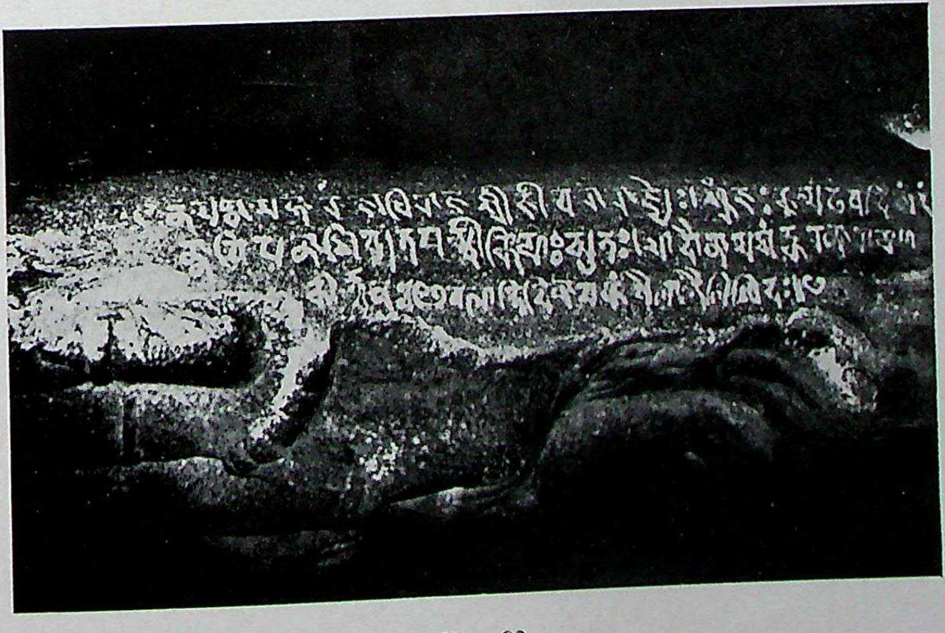

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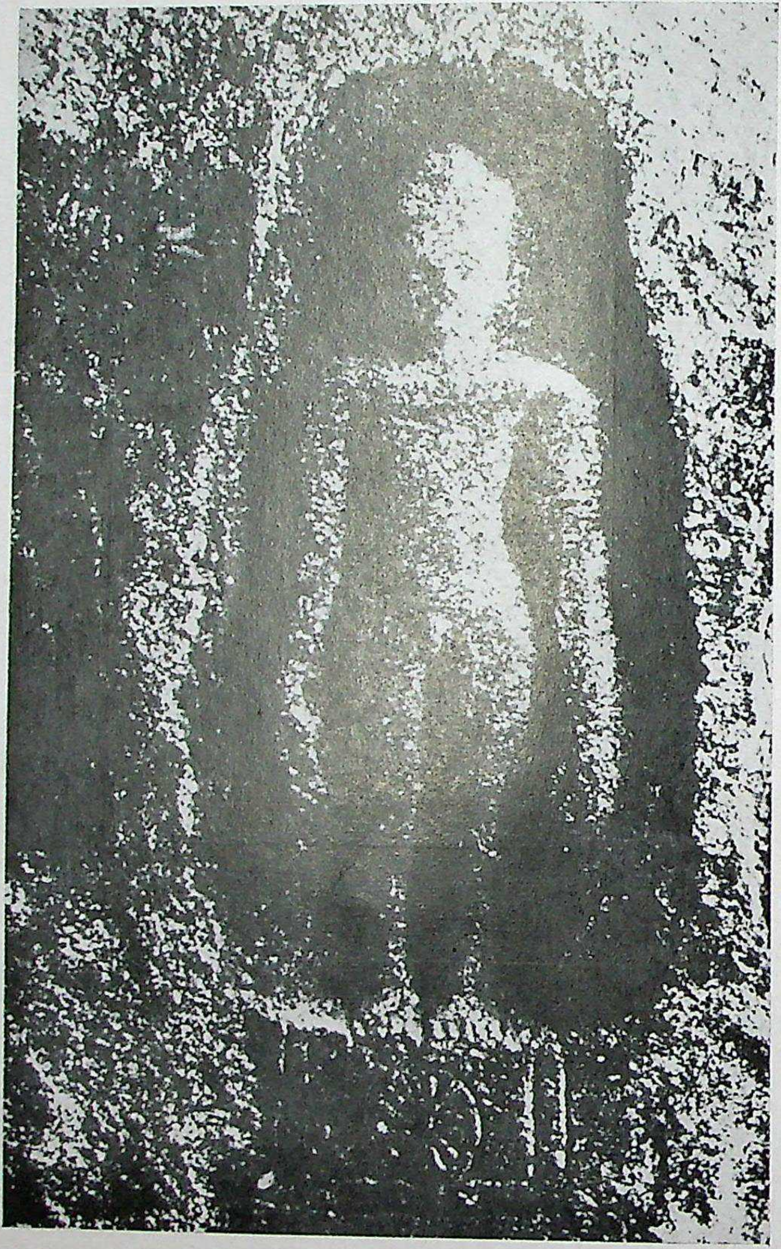

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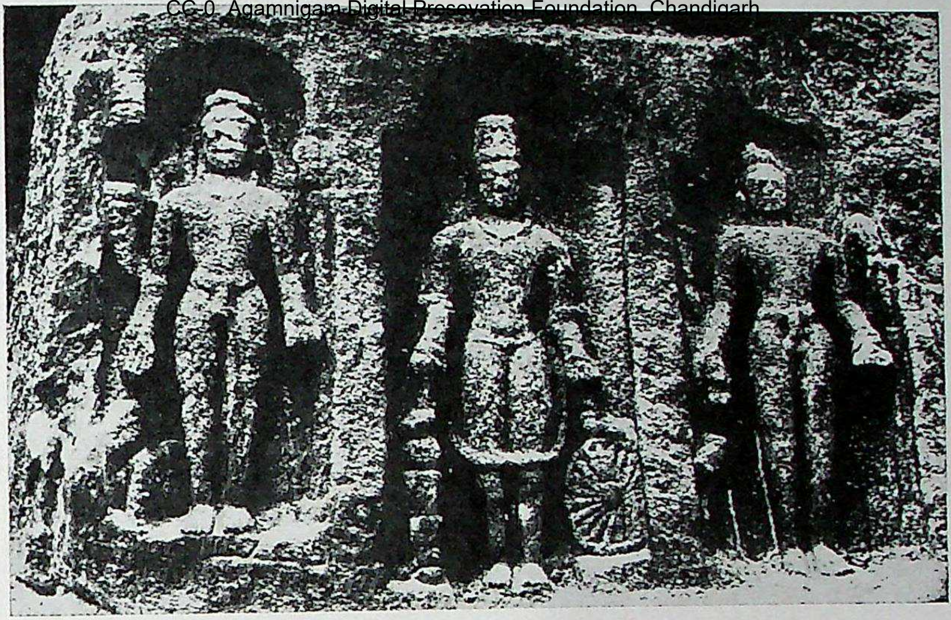

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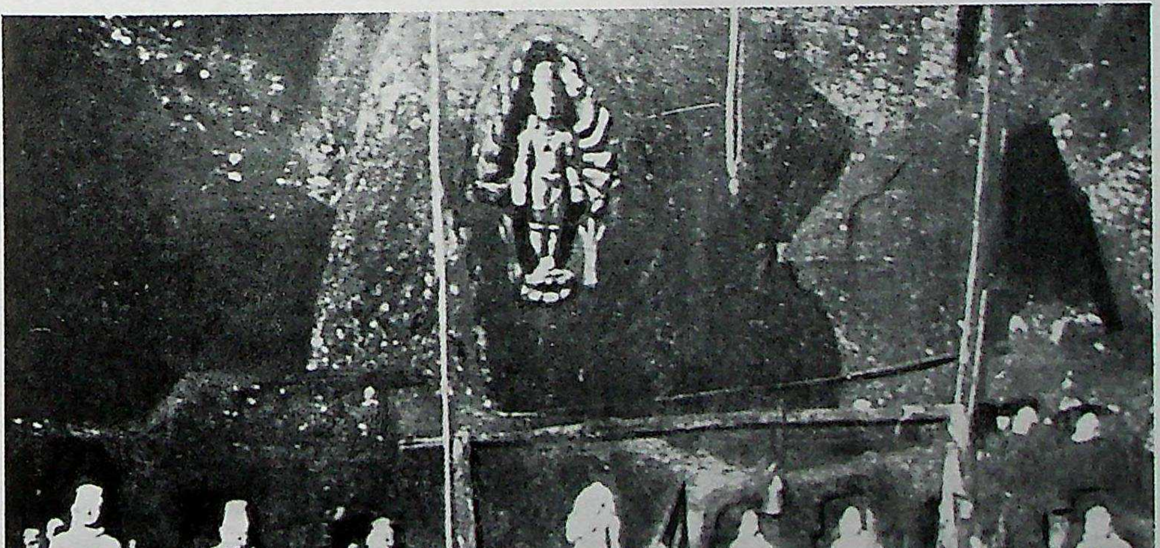

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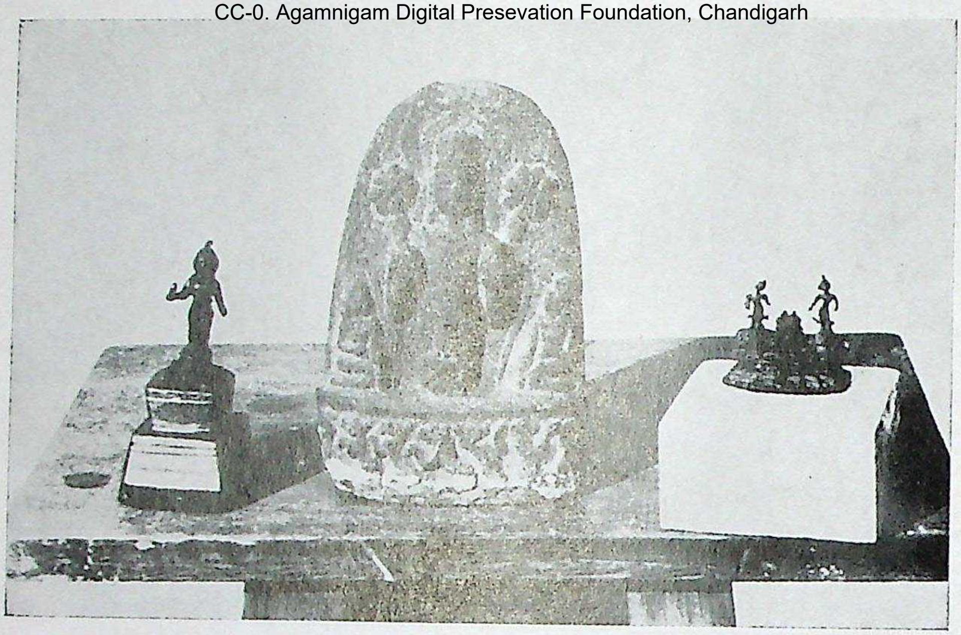

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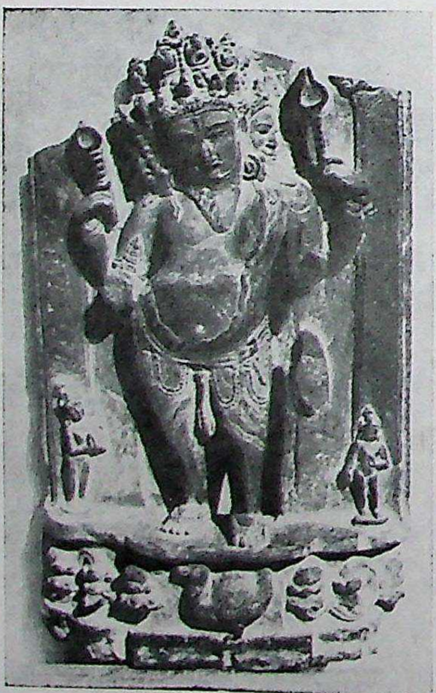

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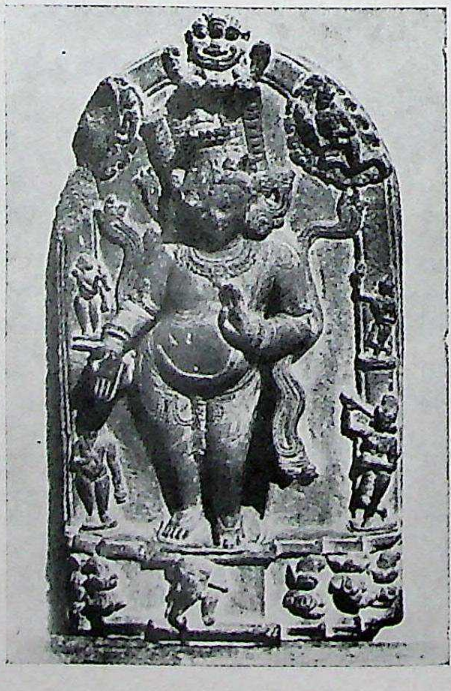

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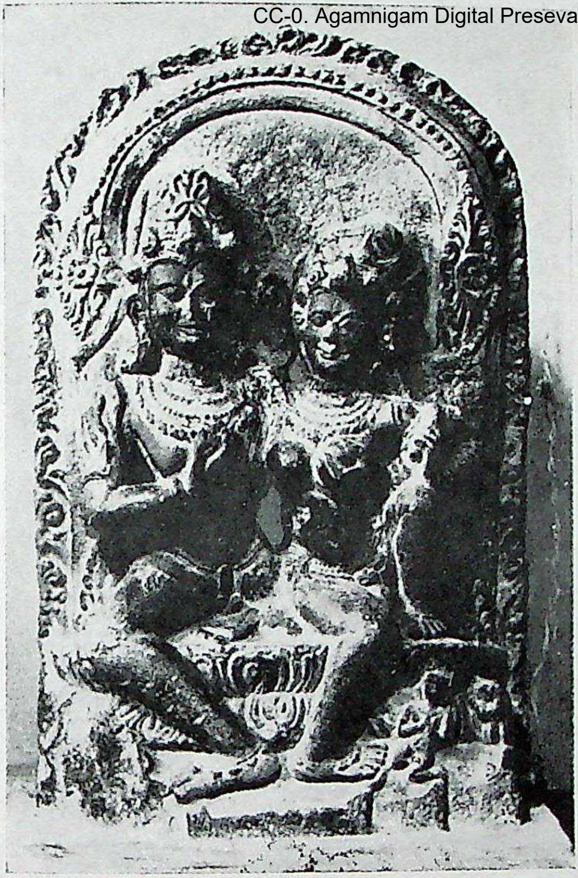

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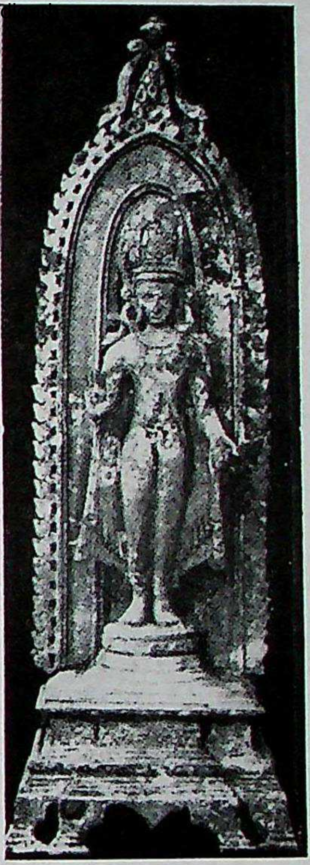

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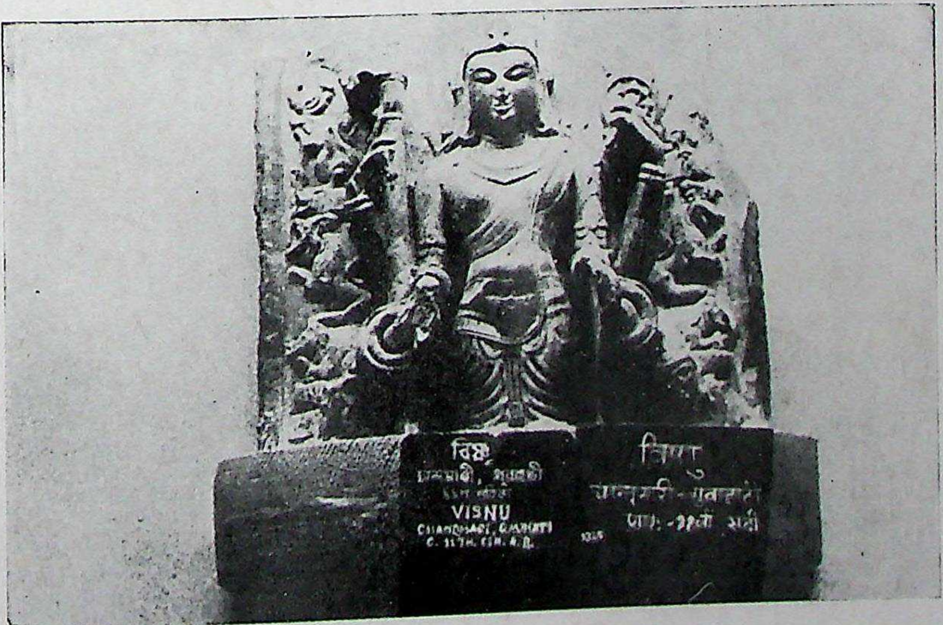

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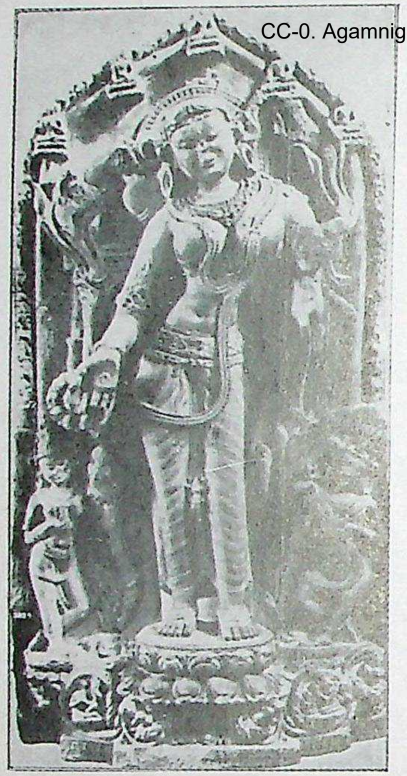
Fig. 71



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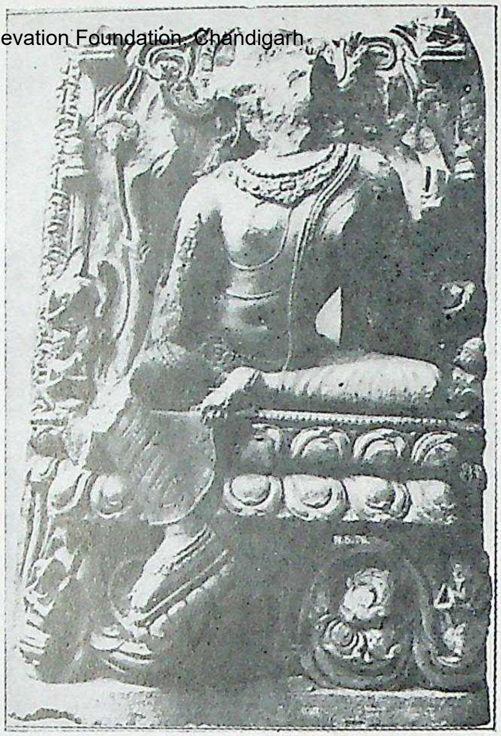

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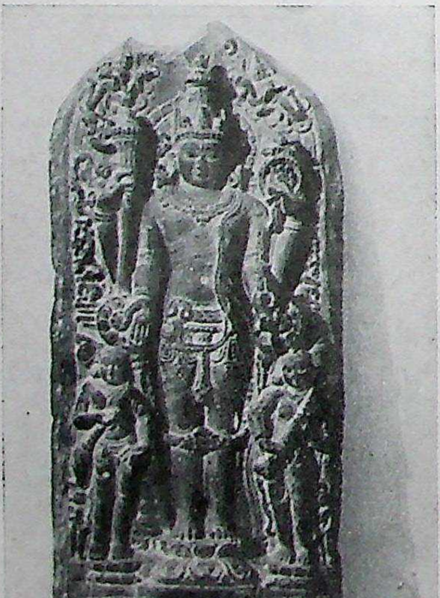

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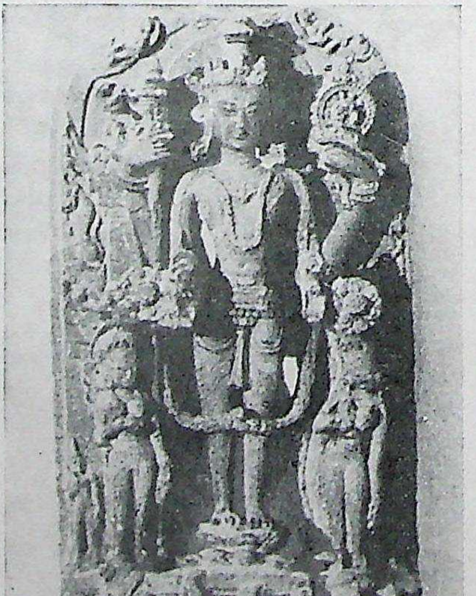

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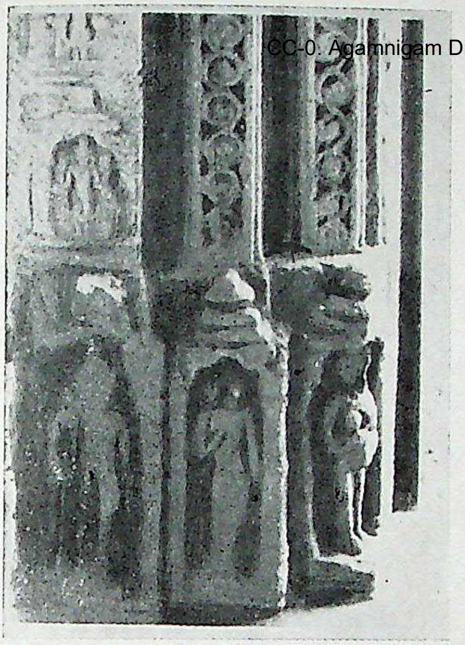

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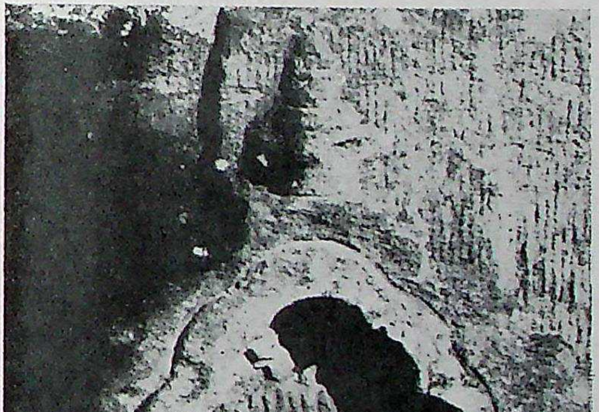

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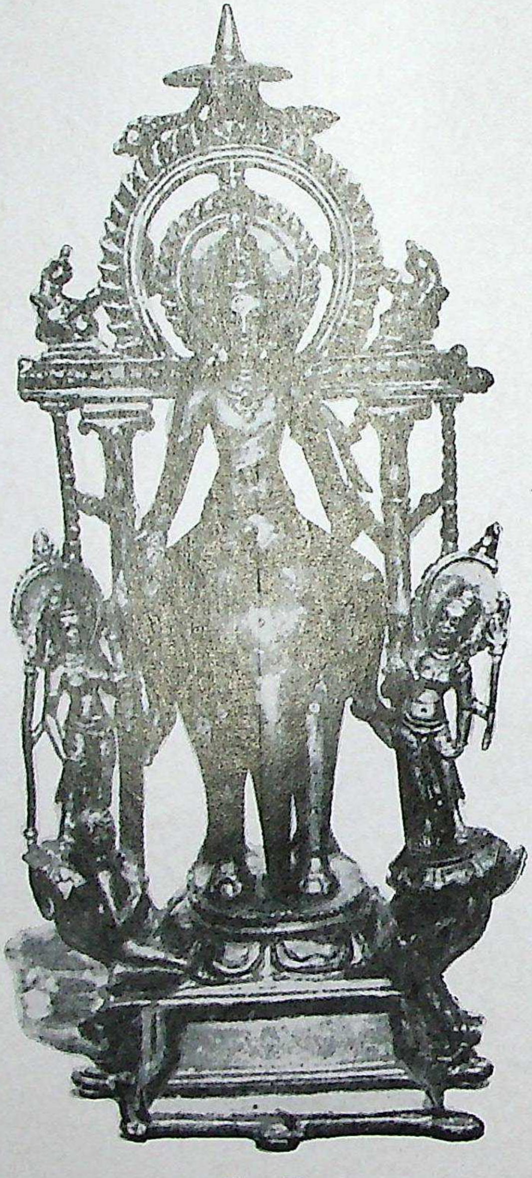

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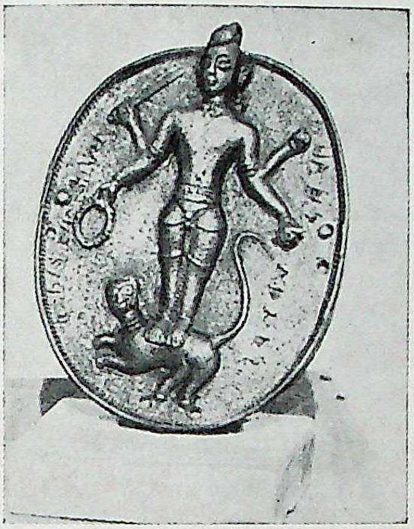

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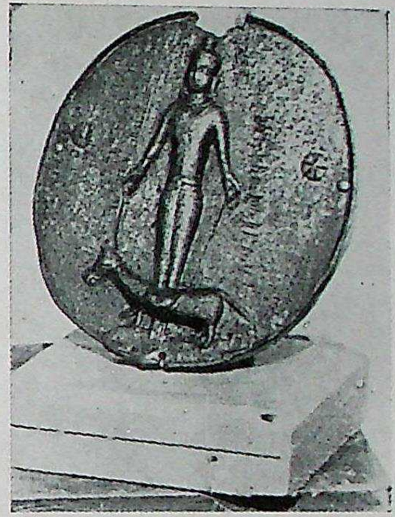

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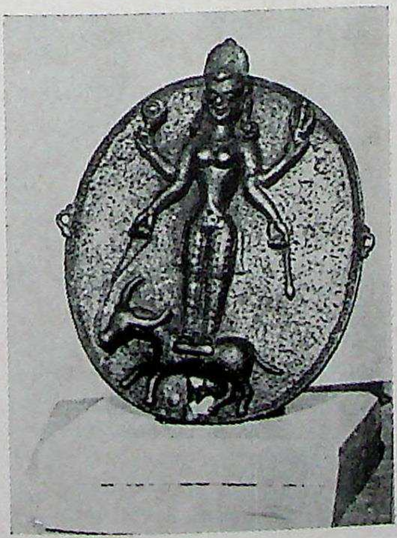

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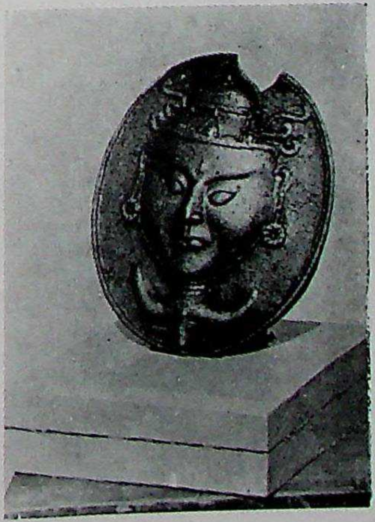

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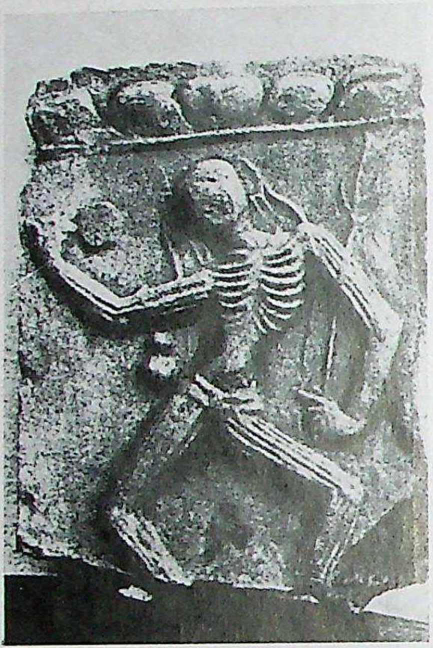

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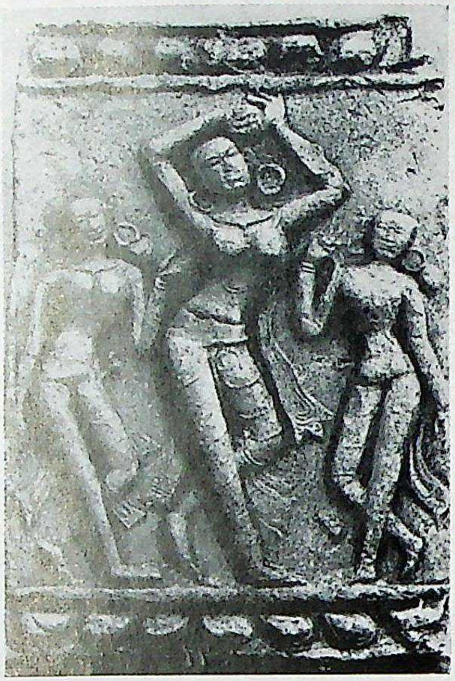

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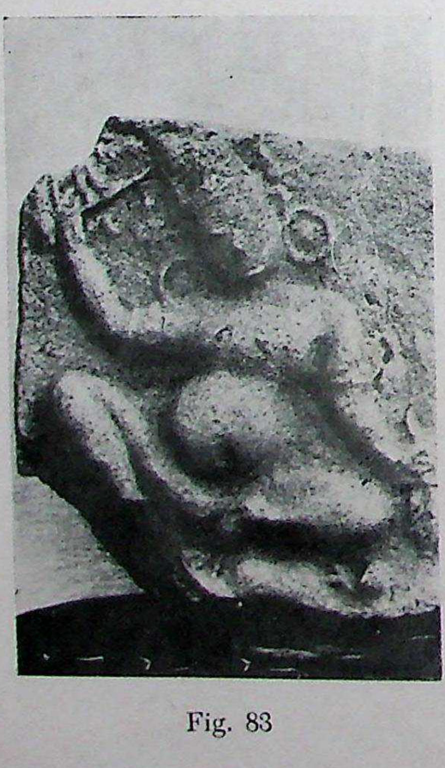

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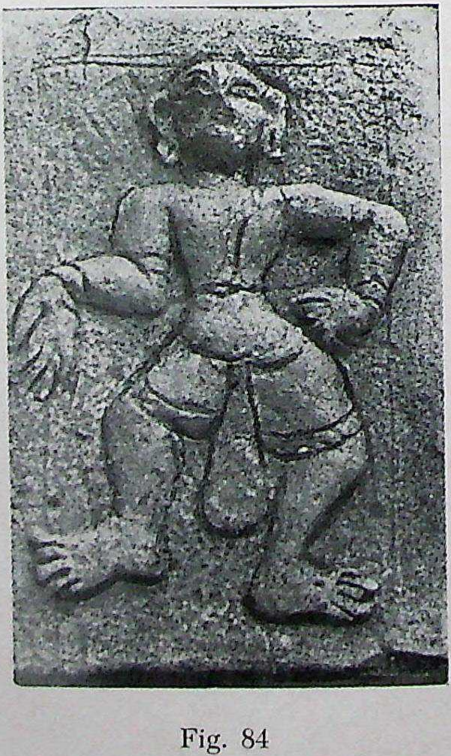

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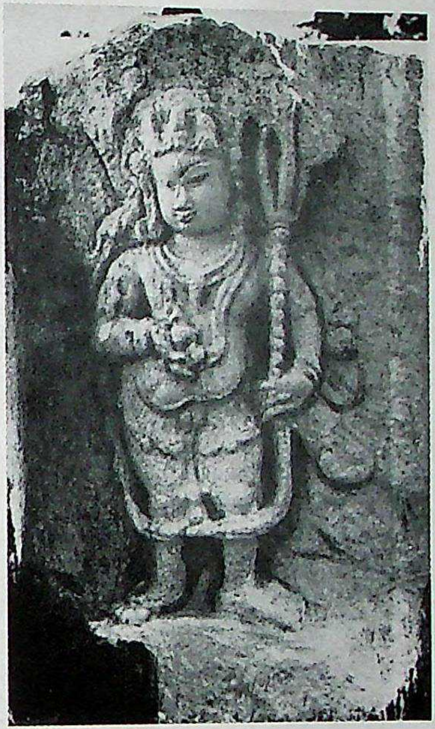

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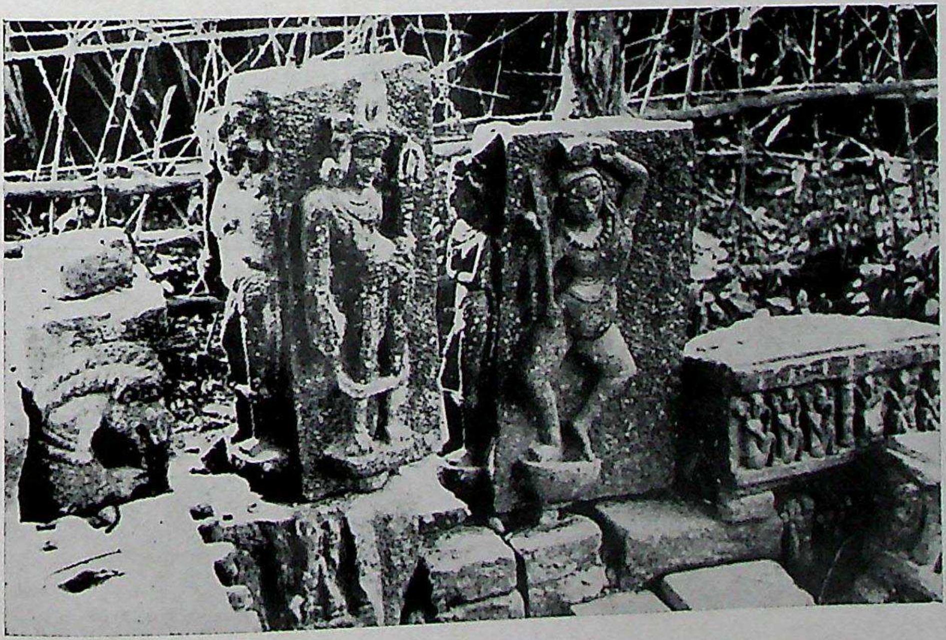

Fig. 86

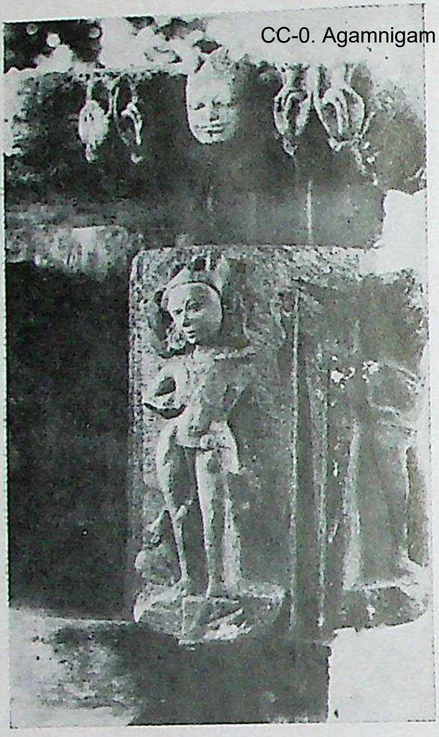

Fig. 87

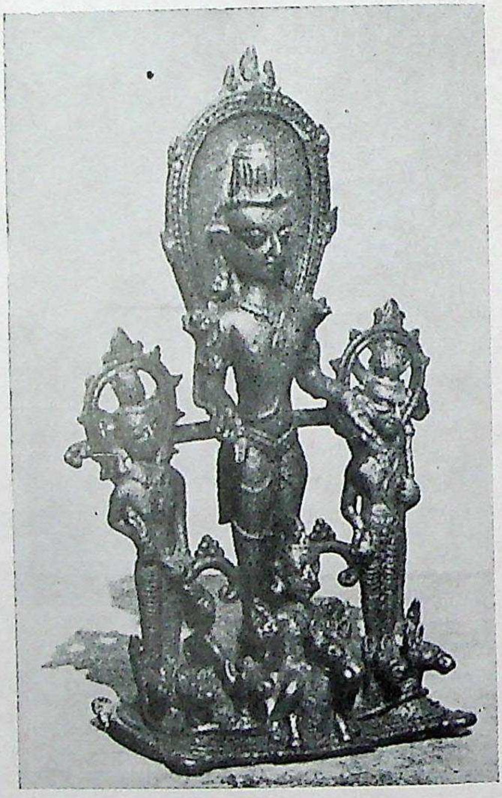

Fig. 88

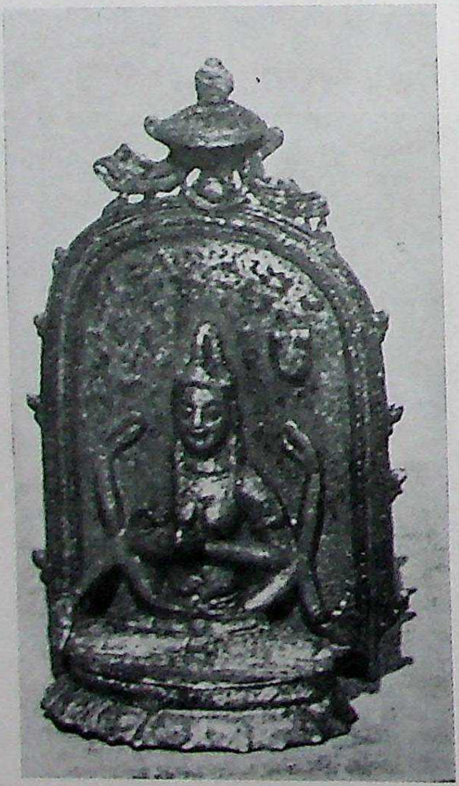

Fig. 89

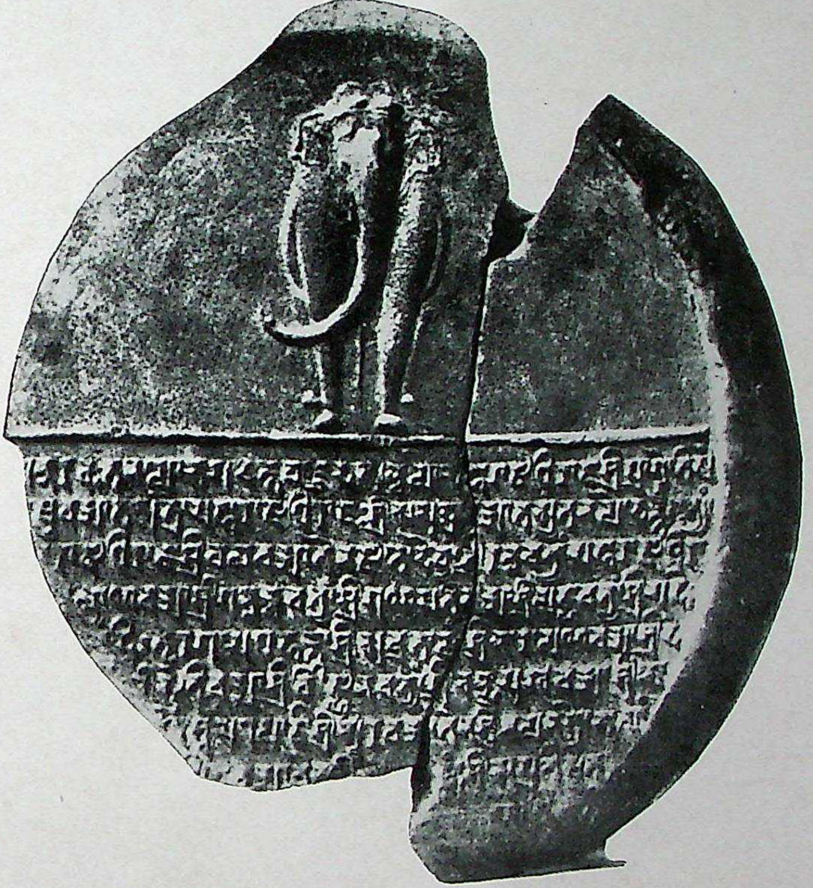

Fig. 90

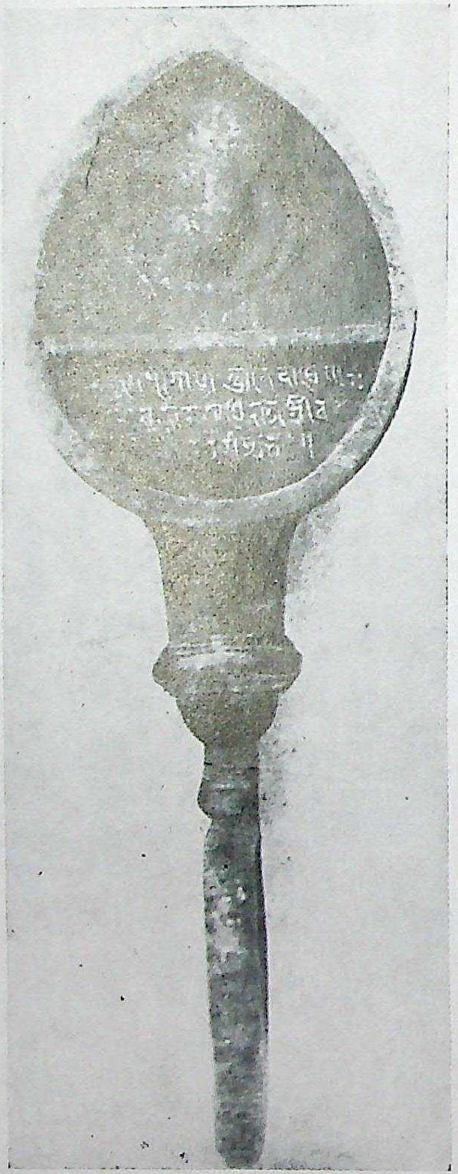

Fig. 91

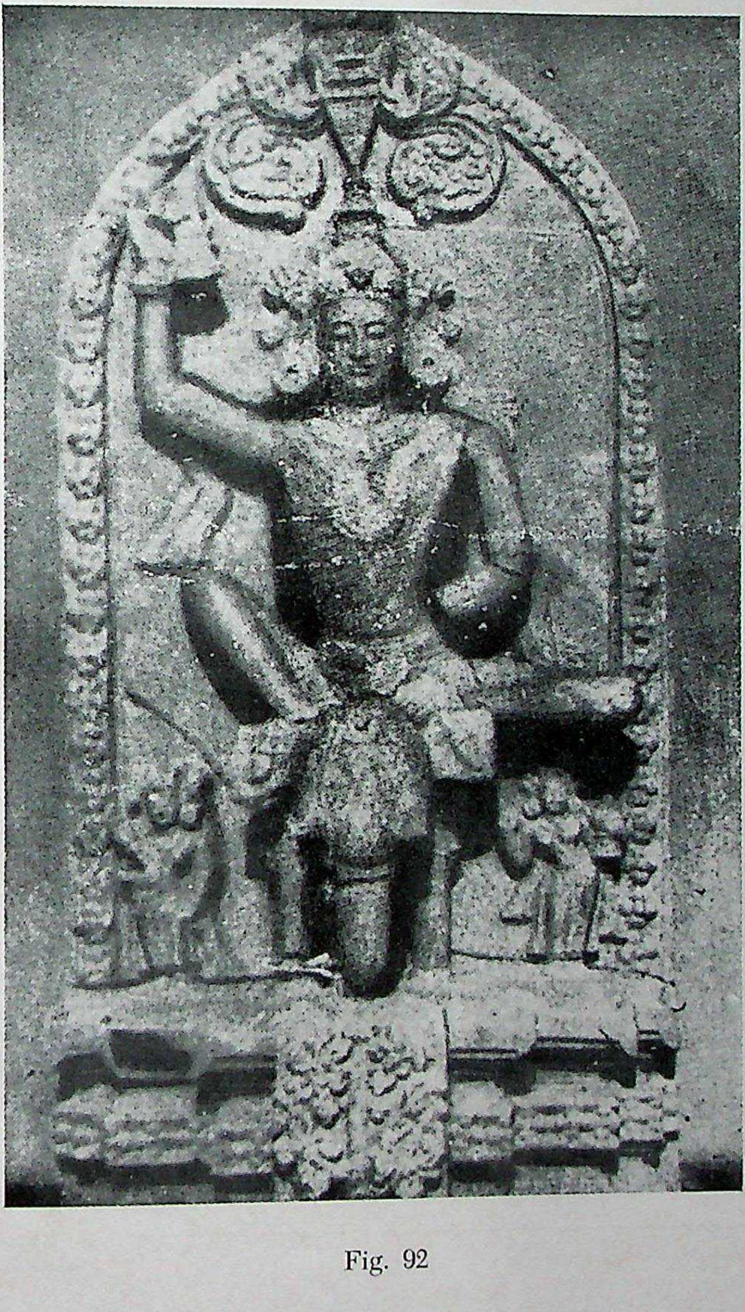

Fig. 92

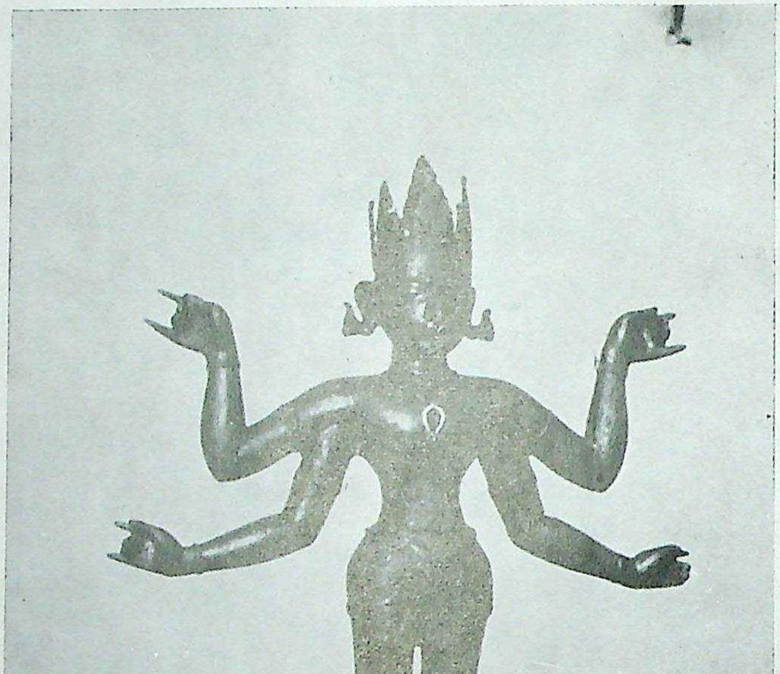

Fig. 93

CORRIGENDA

Page no.	Line no.	In place of	Read
4	18	Prajñāpāramitā	Prajñāpāramitā,
7	25	Kakdhighi	Kakdighi
20	30	Kakdigihi	Kakdighi
25	6 and 21	Davoka	Davaka
29	10	in	on
32	32	with	in
51	7	*Ṛig Veda*”	*Ṛig Veda*”,
52	25	Keśavaśvāmi	Keśavasvāmī
52	40	*l’cole*	***l’École***